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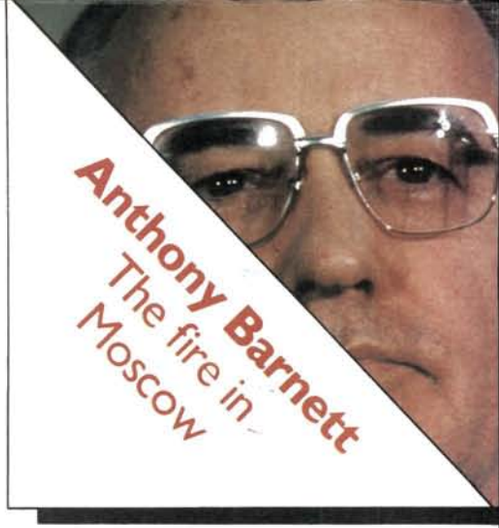
STATESMAN

Anti-anti-**racism**

Elgy Gillespie: Dukakoi



Anthony Barnett
The fire in Moscow

MR NASTY

All dressed up — & nowhere to go

Cover photo: John Sturrock/Network

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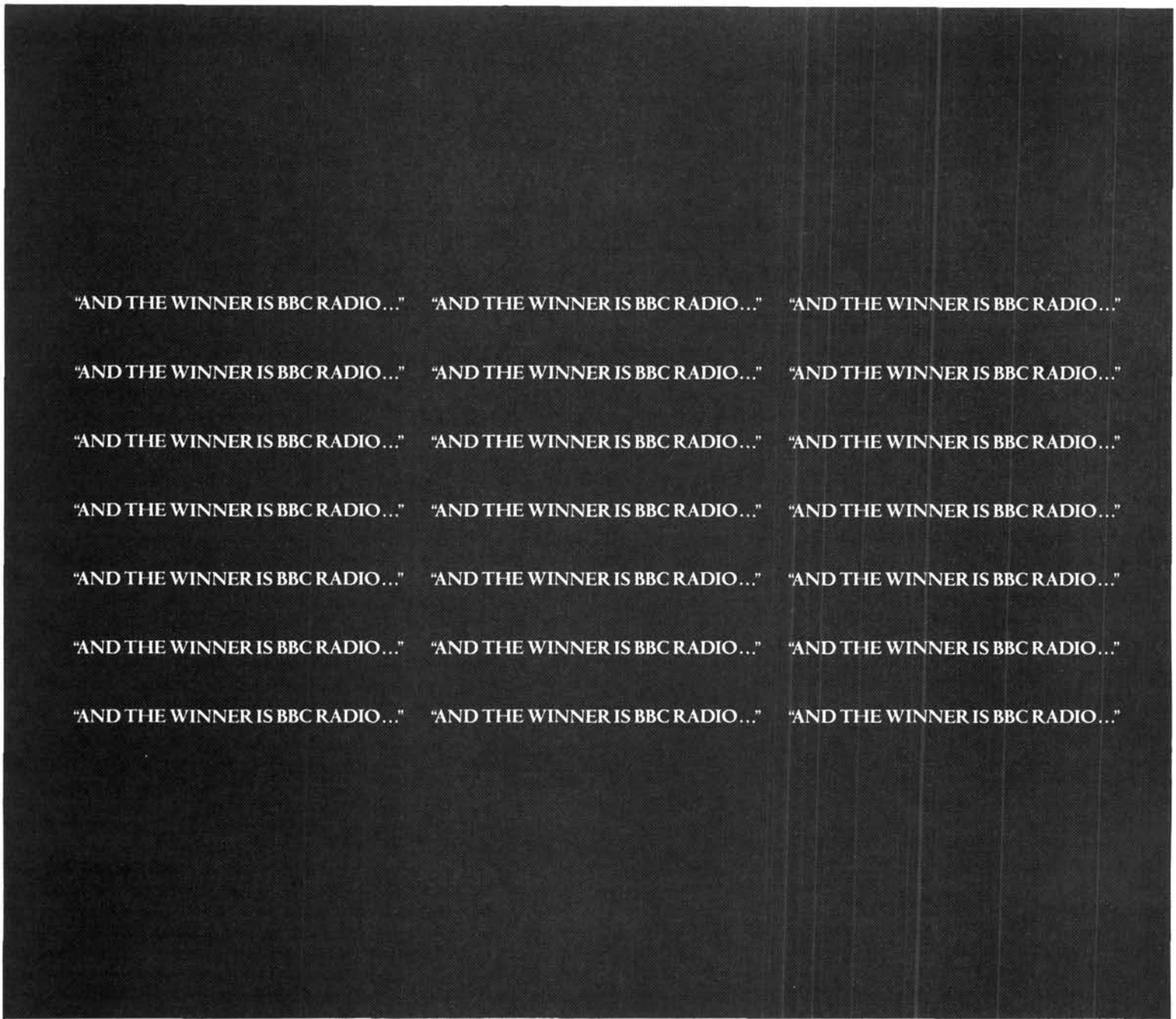

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The greatest contempt

THE PHRASE "contempt of court" sounds archaic, pompous and inexact. Yet "contempt" is exactly the word to describe this government's attitude to the rule of law. For it, the law is a tool, to be used where expedient and ignored where necessary. It hires the country's finest legal brains at vast expense to think up new ways of harassing Peter Wright; yet when it comes to finding out why three unarmed IRA terrorists were gunned down by the SAS in Gibraltar, it does nothing.

The Foreign Office's claim that the *This Week* programme (which suggested that the three were shot dead without being given a chance to surrender) was prejudicial to next month's inquest is extraordinary on several levels. For one thing, *This Week* is broadcast in Britain, not Gibraltar, where the inquest jury is to be drawn. For another, lawyers until quite recently thought it impossible to be in contempt of a coroners' court. But this is not the first time that this government, disregarding the actual law, has pretended that the contempt rules apply to overseas court hearings. Last summer Mrs Thatcher refused to answer parliamentary questions about Peter Wright on the spurious grounds that the Australian trial made it "sub judice".

More important than such technicalities is the fact that the government has behaved in ways that prejudice the outcome of the inquest far more thoroughly than the inquiries of any television journalist. There was the initial false story put out that a white Renault 5 parked near the Governor's residence had contained 440lb of explosive, and the suggestion that the terrorists had been armed. Then there was Mrs Thatcher's angry response to Amnesty International's request for information about the shootings, which amounted to a passionate defence of the SAS actions. Next there was the disgraceful smearing of *This Week*'s witness, Carmen Proetta, by sources unknown. And finally the government disinformation machine spent the tail end of last week talking off the record to the *Sunday Times* in an attempt to undermine the television programme. The chances of a Gibraltar jury arriving at the inquest next month with open minds were, thanks to the government and its Fleet Street friends, negligible long ago.

There is now ample evidence that the SAS does not try to take prisoners when it goes hunting. In the ten known incidents in Northern Ireland between 1981 and 1986 which allegedly involved the SAS, 14 paramilitaries and two civilians were killed, but only three prisoners were taken. In Northern Ireland, we are lucky to get an inquest at all. The police can launch their own investigation, which, while it takes place, blocks any inquest. In practice, such an "investigation" can take years — and the government, for "policy reasons", has refused to do anything about it.

In the Gibraltar case, government ministers have been denied the luxury of a straightforward bureaucratic cover-up. Instead they have used the long-standing fiction, wheeled out whenever there's an awkward death on the British mainland — cf the Colin Roach case — that an inquest is some kind of broad-ranging public enquiry, capable of rooting out the whole truth come what may. The odds are stacked against Felix Pazzarelloi, the Gibraltar part-time stipendiary magistrate who doubles as coroner, discovering anything the British government does not want discovered: his investigations are carried out for him by the Gilbraltar police, who are hardly dispassionate observers. Their tardy inquiries into the killings as discovered by *Spotlight*, Northern Ireland's documentary programme, will be familiar to Northern Irish audiences. Unpalatable facts are not likely to emerge in a court where Mr Pazzarelloi alone decides what witness to call, where he asks most of the questions, where he alone has sight of the witness statements and where cross-examination of witnesses is forbidden.

If, as seems increasingly possible, the IRA members in Gibraltar were shot dead on the direct instructions of a prime minister who wanted bodies instead of prisoners, then this goes beyond routine SAS lawlessness. It should come as no surprise. Mrs Thatcher demonstrated her contempt for the rule of law with the Belgrano in 1982. In that case, military rules of engagement were, with total disregard for international law, secretly changed to allow a new "shoot to sink" policy outside the previously declared exclusion zone.

Now Mrs Thatcher has decided that there is no exclusion zone for the IRA either. Last year, after the Enniskillen bombing, she announced that there would be no safe haven for IRA terrorists anywhere in the world. So it looks as though we have gun-toting government shooting from the hip around the globe in an attempt to root out its enemies. This, of course, is exactly how Colonel Gadafy works — a comparison which no longer looks fanciful. "Be ye never so high, the law is above you," Lord Denning once reminded an errant government minister. But Mrs Thatcher rests her defence not in the courts but in public opinion. The worst of it is that public opinion is with her. □

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DIARY

Yorkshire

I like those signs on the M1 motorway directing drivers to "The North". But I'm surprised Margaret Thatcher has not yet had them removed, in view of her insistence that the North-South divide is a figment of our imagination. For the definite article signifies that the North is indeed an entity, not just a compass point. More could be done, I think, to embarrass the government on this point. Entering the North could become an occasion as laden with ceremony as Crossing the Equator. If you've got North-South divide, flaunt it. All we need to agree on is where the North starts . . .

○

These thoughts crossed my mind last Friday as I was driving up from Oxfordshire to North Yorkshire. A journey up the M1 tends to inspire such melancholy musings. Look at those brown signs announcing the tourist attractions to be found just off the motorway: nothing gives a clearer picture of the New Britain. At Exit 26, for instance, near Nottingham, we are alerted to The American Adventure. This turns out to be a "theme park" where, for a fiver, you can see a real live bison, sail round a pond on an ersatz Mississippi riverboat and take countless rides on carousels with such names as Tennessee Tentacles and Boston Tea Party. And all "on the edge of the beautiful Derbyshire Peak District", as the brochure points out. Who could resist?

○

I could, for one, not least because I was saving my energy for an even ghastlier theme park north of Ripon, calling itself Lightwater Valley. This has added an extra "£2m worth of terror" for its 1988 season, most of which seems to be invested on the Soopa Loopa, "Britain's newest, fastest, most terrifying white-knuckle ride". It is essentially a helter skelter with a double loop-the-loop in its track, along which you are hurtled at speeds up to 57 mph. "Designed to separate the men from the boys," brags the advertising. And if the Soopa Loopa fails to thrill, try the Rat Ride, amusingly billed as "the most terrifying ride this century". Passengers sitting in a wagon shaped like a huge rat are plunged 50 feet underground "through vile smelly sewers alive with the sound of screeching rats, all in total darkness". Unmissable. Then there's the Chair-o-Plane, a "thrill machine" which whirls you around in mid-air at high speed, not to mention the Sky-o-Scope, which involves much hanging upside-down. Lightwater Valley is the place for any good Thatcherite. As the brochure boasts, "it combines the fun, dreams and white knuckle thrills offered by the best 'WORLD RATED' leisure parks in a quality British setting". It is, in short, "an outstanding model of today's new leisure culture".

○

Ah yes, the leisure culture, inseparable spouse of the enterprise culture. A tenth of Britain's working population is now employed in the "tourist industry". One of my purposes in meandering around the North of England over the May Bank Holiday weekend was to see what Thatcherite leisure culture means.

I spotted the first clue on the M1, when I passed a lorry bearing a huge red flibreglass dragon. The grinning monster, which looked oddly like a cross between Cecil Parkinson and Mickey Mouse, was on its way to a new home, probably at a Theme Park or a Fun Pub — or Theme Pub or Fun Park, for that matter. Britain is full of such creatures these days. An hour or two later I noticed a "carvery" near Ripon whose gate was guarded by garishly painted models of a pig and a heavily-uddered cow. They appeared to be snogging.

○

Leisure culture means marketing, too. A friend of mine recently filled a map of Britain with the new place names invented for tourism — "*Last of the Summer Wine* country" and so on. A promotional newspaper that I picked up in Harrogate described the Yorkshire Dales as "The TV Dales" because they were the setting for *Emmerdale Farm* and *All Creatures Great and Small*. And the ineffable magician Paul Daniels is exploiting his televisual celebrity like billy-o in promoting his new business venture near Harrogate, Old Mother Shipton's Cave and Well. Old Mother Shipton herself was (allegedly) born in 1488. She made several Nostradamus-style prophecies which Paul Daniels describes as "timely words of wisdom and direction". He ought to watch out. One of the Mother's timely couplets runs as follows: "But when the North shall divide the South/An eagle shall build in the lion's mouth." The first line refers to the American civil war, and the second, clear as vodka, is a pointed comment on the stationing of American F-111s at Upper Heyford. If Paul Daniels wants to remain the personification of vulgar Thatcherism he shouldn't be disseminating Communistic twaddle of this sort.

ROGER WODDIS

It all depends . . .

(After "Lines for a Worthy Person", by A. P. Herbert)

As all the Daily papers say,
  Thank goodness we are free,
Unlike the Poles, who pledge their souls
  To Solidaritee —
And what the daily papers say
  Is good enough for me.

How brave they are to go on strike!
  How worthy is their cause!
The way they fight for what is right
  Against oppressive laws
And party cranks deserves our thanks,
  And earns our warm applause.

Walesa warrants our support,
  McCluskie needs restraint:
If only he would bow the knee,
  Ignoring each complaint,
Our press would bless the NUS,
  And Sam would be a saint.

○

"As Seen on TV" helps, obviously, but it isn't essential. A famous writer in an area can be just as good. Hence "James Herriot country" and "Catherine Cookson country", both promoted vigorously in the past couple of years. The example they follow — which predates even the leisure culture — is Brontë country. I strolled around Haworth last Sunday and was reassured to find that it is still thriving, with its Rochesters (*sic*) pub, its Heathcliffe (*sic*) bed and breakfast and its Villette coffee house. "This was the Post Office in the time of the Brontës," a notice above the door of the Brontë bookshop revealed, desperately straining to establish a connection, "and here their famous manuscripts were posted." Better still was the sign on the Old Apothecary: "Here Branwell Brontë purchased the opium which was the indirect cause of his death."

I noticed with sinking heart that the bookshop was selling two works by a hitherto unknown Brontë sibling, Austin Mitchell MP. They were called *Yorkshire Jokes* and *Teach Thissen Tyke* . If interest in the Brontës and James Herriot starts to flag, Yorkshire could always be redesignated The Austin Mitchell Experience.

○

All that stood between me and the Giant Rat of Lightwater Valley on Saturday and Sunday was the weather. I can tolerate a Soopa Loopa and I can tolerate rain, but not both at once. In spite of the mist and drizzle, throughout the Bank Holiday weekend Herriot country teemed with serious walkers in knee-breeks and anoraks, as well as serious cyclists pedalling uphill in slow motion, their day-glo spray-on body stockings glistening with sweat and raindrops. On Saturday afternoon I was alarmed to see a man of the same age and build as Robert Maxwell buying a pair of hiking boots at a shoe-shop in Grassington. I hope he is still alive.

○

One essential part of the leisure culture, I discover, is eating. You must eat often, eat a lot, and eat badly. This has been the rule at railway stations for some time. However short your journey, when you board a train it is now *de rigeur* to carry at least one Casey Jones Stinkburger with large French Fries plus a couple of "croissants" filled with tepid cream cheese. The new breed of Theme Parks and Heritage Museums has followed this lead, giving high priority to stuffing food-style products down the gullets of the paying customers at every opportunity. You can then leap on to a dizzying Soopa Loopa and bring it all up again.

○

Well, the Bank Holiday came and went, and still I failed to investigate the Rat of Lightwater Valley on your behalf. But I began to think this was just as well. The Rat Ride may well be, like Sherlock Holmes's Giant Rat of Sumatra, a story for which the world is not yet prepared.

Francis Wheen

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Report complacent on radiation losses

LARGE quantities of dangerous radioactivity have gone missing in Britain without anyone creating much of a fuss. According to a recently published but virtually unnoticed government report, there have been numerous incidents outside the nuclear industry — at private companies, hospitals and universities — in which radioactive material has been lost, stolen or leaked into the environment.

The most serious incident is the loss of a 10-billion-bequerel source of americium 241 in transit between Stansted airport and Amersham. The Department of the Environment's Radiochemical Inspectorate's report for 1986-87 reveals that "extensive investigations" failed to find it. It says that the incident uncovered "deficiencies" in the procedures which needed to be amended. But no action was taken against the company involved, the lately privatised radio-isotope manufacturer, Amersham International.

The report's conclusion is as shocking as it is complacent: "This is an example of a number of similar reported losses which have occurred over the years at transit warehouses, particularly at airports, and highlights the need for good security and accounting — for which Inspectors press in the course of their visits."

Other incidents recounted in the report are similarly worrying:

☐ Some 15 million bequerels of rubidium 81 was inadvertently released at a North London Hospital resulting in the contamination of a treatment room. The Inspectorate expressed its "concern".

☐ About 35 thousand billion bequerels of gaseous tritium leaked into a building from light devices being manufactured by a West London firm. The company was taken to court and fined £5,000 plus £500 costs.

☐ A road compaction gauge containing 370 million bequerels of caesium 137 and 1.85 billion bequerels of americium 241 was severely damaged by a road roller in Northern England. The national emergency arrangements were initiated, although — luckily — it appears that no radioactivity was released.

☐ There were losses, in most cases presumed to be thefts, of anti-static devices (used for spray painting) containing polonium 210 from premises in Buckinghamshire, Derbyshire, Greater Manchester, Shropshire, West Midlands and West Yorkshire.

☐ A half-million-bequerel source of barium 133 was lost from a hospital Medical Physics Department in February 1987 and later found in a waste bin.

☐ A home in Paignton, Devon, was contaminated by low-level radiation after some radium dust was sent through the post "possibly maliciously".

The potential risks to health from such incidents are substantial. Britain is lucky that it has not experienced anything like last year's tragedy in Brazil where people became so radioactive from handling caesium from a broken cancer treatment device that they had to be buried in lead-lined coffins.

The potential risks of material going missing from the nuclear power industry are even greater. Since 1970 some 300 kilogrammes of plutonium and highly-enriched uranium have been "unaccounted for" at the nuclear complexes at Sellafield in Cumbria and at Dounreay in Caithness. If some of these materials had been stolen, it is possible that no one would have noticed.

Any terrorist group in possession of them would not have much difficulty in making a crude atomic bomb, given a garden shed, a few weeks and a little enterprise. My recently published book* illustrates how easily it could be done. In it, my co-author and I describe how plutonium would have to be worked into a hollow sphere, surrounded by a layer of beryllium (purchasable from a company in Wales), and then encircled by some shaped plastic explosives attached to a fuse capable of detonating them all at precisely the same moment. With modern microchip technology this would be far easier to arrange now than it ever was in 1945 in the New Mexican desert.

In an article in the *Daily Mirror*, under the headline "SCANDAL OF THE DIY A-BOMB MANUAL", the book was condemned by Tory MP Winston Churchill as "grossly irresponsible". The real scandal is of course the availability of potential bomb-making materials in the first place. If anyone should be labelled irresponsible, it is those who are keen to drag us towards a world in which plutonium becomes commonplace.

Rob Edwards

* *Britain's Nuclear Nightmare*, by James Cutler and Rob Edwards, is published by Sphere Books.

Competition vs morality

THATCHERISM sometimes has the makings of a torrid potboiler mini-series on ITV. The government's dilemma on how to deal with television could easily take up one episode. Margaret Hilda, the rags-to-riches grocer's daughter who made it to the top job in the country, torn between her lust for competition and a passion for moral values. Will she allow commercial television to fight over viewers' favours in an unbridled free market, or will she impose chastity through a masochistic desire for regulation?

Television does not allow two key elements of Thatcherism — the economic freedom of the competitive market and the emphasis on moral values acceptable to the family — to live alongside each other without compromise. The government is still undecided on how to deal with the medium barely three months before a White Paper on broadcasting is due.

In a report published last week, *Independent Broadcasting in the 1990s*, the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) defended the principle of public service broadcasting run by commercial companies, in the belief that viewers' interests have to be protected by regulation. The ITV network has never been considered a "full" commercial service outside this country because it has always held a monopoly on advertising. Like the BBC, it is obliged to offer a range of quality programmes including those covering educational and community interests. This feature is regulated by the IBA which also acts as a watchdog on questions of sex and violence.

As such, the IBA has an image in the corridors of power as an alternative auntie to the BBC and not in keeping with the competitive spirit of the forthcoming new channels. Three channels will be operated by British Satellite Broadcasting (BSB) from the end of 1989 and will have to follow IBA guidelines, with the probable addition of a fifth conventional channel. A handful of channels will be beamed down from the Astra satellite by next

If the caption fits

No 66

May 1988 is finally here. With twenty years' hindsight, what do you think Tariq Ali should have been saying to the breathless and awaiting throng? (Many apologies to the fashion conscious among you but, in the interest of space, we had to crop the flares.) Speech/thinks bubbles or captions please on a postcard by Monday 16 May. £10 book token for the winner.

No 64 Winner

Mrs Thatcher: "I can assure you, Mother Teresa, no one cares more about the homeless than . . . er . . . than . . . um . . . no, I'm afraid it's gone." (*Kevin Clancy, Preston.*)

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year, but these will not fall under the spell of the IBA.

There are signs that the government will follow at least some elements of the regulatory outlook. Legislation from the EEC and the Council of Europe is set to govern advertising levels and restrict the use of cheap non-European programming. A new Broadcasting Standards Council is now certain to go ahead; a Home Office minister emerged suitably chastened from a fact-finding visit to Italy earlier this year after seeing some of the more risqué parts of the commercial channels run by Silvio Berlusconi.

The extent of the Broadcasting Standards Council's powers are still under discussion, but it will join the IBA, the BBC board of governors, the Broadcasting Complaints Commission, and the Cable Authority in supervising programme standards. Even allowing for the slight variation in remit for each body, it is not in keeping with Thatcherism to allow a bureaucratic overdose of five bodies to cater for a single basic function.

IBA responsibilities will be diminished by the council. But this auntie is not placid. Last Thursday, the IBA chairman Lord Thomson rejected a Foreign Office request to prevent the screening of *This Week*'s investigation into the shooting of three IRA members in Gibraltar. Two days earlier, Lord Thomson had already adopted an uncompromising stand in the IBA report by not agreeing with the government in key areas for the future of television. In particular, the IBA has rejected one idea favoured by the Home Office, to auction ITV franchises off to the highest bidder. This, the IBA fears, only looks at costs but takes no account of the quality of programming to be supplied by the franchise holder.

The state of broadcasting has been a salient political issue in France for several years. In Italy, new legislation governing television was one of the bargaining counters for socialist participation in the latest government reshuffle. With the IBA's bullishness, and Lord Thomson's tenure as chairman expiring at the end of 1988, the fate of public service broadcasting is set to play an important part in the political agenda on this side of the Channel.

Peter Capella

Squeeze on alternatives to hospital births

THIS WEEK, midwife Jilly Rosser may be struck off the register if she is judged incompetent by the United Kingdom Central Council, the disciplinary body for nurses, midwives and health visitors. According to the Midwives Autonomy Action Group (MAAG), launched last week, this is just one example of the threat independent mid-wives face from a medical hierarchy set against home deliveries. There are 20 other independent midwives in the country, seven of whom are also facing suspension and other disciplinary measures.

Ms Rosser's case draws attention to a wider issue, that of the increasing restrictions on women's freedom to choose where and how they give birth. If Jilly Rosser can no longer practise her craft, the women in her locality who want a home confinement will no longer have that option. But affecting greater numbers of women across the country is the fate of GP maternity units which, if many health authorities have their way, will become a thing of the past.

Originally called maternity homes, they were established after the First World War to provide a hygienic environment for poorer women to deliver their babies under the supervision of a midwife. Now GP maternity units provide a halfway house between home and a hospital birth. Most women are delivered by the midwife who has looked after them throughout pregnancy with a GP in attendance. All being well, mother and baby are sent home within hours of delivery.

Although popular with many women who found the units friendly, accessible and non-medical, since 1976 the average number of beds available in GP maternity units has dropped from 3,099 to 1,844. Critics say they are unsafe and expensive, but recent studies call their evidence into question.

As far as safety is concerned, a report published last year by the National Perinatal Epidemiology Unit in Oxford found no difference between the perinatal mortality and morbidity rates of babies born in hospital and of home deliveries in GP maternity units. However, there are higher intervention rates in hospital for comparable low-risk women. A National Childbirth Trust study published last year found an association between intervention, such as caesarian sections and forceps deliveries, and increased infection.

As for cost, economist Miranda Mugford argues that economics of maternity care are little researched except for one study in 1979 which found the cost to the NHS of obstetric departments in hospitals was greater than for GP maternity units.

Nevertheless, DHSS policy is clear. In a written reply to Harriet Harman MP in November 1987, it reiterated: "Policy is to minimise risk to babies by encouraging delivery in hospitals preferably with access to the full range of facilities which are likely to be found only on district general hospital sites." Closures are happening for two reasons, says Gavin Young, a GP in Temple Sowerby who is fighting the trend. First, because it is assumed that the fall in maternal and infant mortality in this country is due to hospital births when in reality better housing and health are responsible. Second, units are being used as scapegoats by health authorities making financial cuts. Without a consultant to fight for them, they are defenceless. "Childbirth is not a medical problem but a natural physiological function. GP maternity units recognise this and give women the choice of a birth without unnecessary medical intervention," he says.

Pamela Holmes

Action lags behind Green promises

SPRING is a frustrating season for environmentalists. Trees bud, birds nest, governments and industry offer hope when they emerge from hibernation and wake up to the world's ecological problems. But the fledgling measures they promise seem to take a long time to grow.

Faced with a rapidly growing hole in the ozone layer — a layer of gases in the earth's atmosphere that filters harmful ultraviolet rays — over the distant Antarctic, 24 governments gathered in Montreal last September and agreed to a 30-per-cent cut in chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) production by 1998. Several companies had doubted the link between CFC and ozone destruction and the step forward fell short of expectations raised by pre-protocol rhetoric.

One of the companies, Dupont Nemours, appeared to react with commendable alacrity at the end of March when scientists on the Ozone Trends Panel concluded that the ozone layer is thinning close to home over the northern hemisphere. For the international panel of experts, including a scientist from Dupont, the destructive role of aerosols loaded with chlorofluorcarbons is no longer in doubt.

Dupont, the world's largest manufacturer of CFC, has called on other chemical companies to join it in taking "additional steps... for the global protection of the ozone layer". Unfortunately, the major step from Dupont involves "an orderly transition to the total phase-out of CFC production", a laudable promise but without details nothing more than the good intentions already in the air *before* Montreal.

Six months after the *New Statesman* last looked at environmental problems, experts believe governments have learned to cope more effectively but fear they are not acting fast enough. Britain, in particular, is still lagging behind with the Department of Environment insisting on "solid" scientific evidence before it acts.

This year's favourite world environment issue is set to be the "greenhouse effect", prompted by pressure from the Dutch and Canadians. The theory is over twenty years old; a collection of gases from industrial pollution in the earth's atmosphere is thought to be causing a rise in average temperatures throughout the planet, provoking irreversible changes in climate and sea levels.

Emissions from coal-fired power stations may contribute to a large part of the greenhouse. On 21 April, the Central Electricity Generating Board (CEGB) responded calmly to the prospect of economic strife, flood, drought, and famine by announcing that it would contribute £1.25 million over five years to research on how global warming works. Yet the CEGB's tardy and drawn-out investigation of the phenomenon may have to be revised if an international meeting in Toronto in June concludes that the greenhouse effect is at least as urgent a problem as the destruction of the ozone layer.

Londoners will also have doubts about the cautious British approach. Monitoring by the London Scientific Survey, a group of 27 environmental health officers, shows mixed results for air pollution in the capital last year. The LSS also warns that "lettuce and blackberries are unsuitable crops to be grown in inner London" due to high levels of lead contamination, putting paid to the aspirations of the vegetable patch in the back garden. Two decades of lobbying have seen the progressive reduction of lead in petrol, but the build-up of lead in soil is cumulative. As with ozone, the greenhouse, or acid rain, any measures taken only start to have an effect after several years — on top of the time it takes to ponder.

Peter Capella

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Legal lessons of the P&O dispute

THE SEQUESTRATION of the National Union of Seamen's assets has pointed up even more clearly than the Wapping dispute two years ago the narrowness of the confines within which trade unions can now lawfully pursue industrial action. The lines are set by a combination of the Tories' 1980s labour legislation and the exercise of judicial discretion — which this legislation has considerably enlarged. The result is that employers can now play the legal cards in their hand at any stage of a dispute with virtual certainty of success.

The granting of injunctions to Sealink and P&O in February over the NUS's strike call in support of seafarers sacked by the Isle of Man Steampacket Co. was in no way surprising. It was official action called without a ballot and also secondary action, two factors which now disqualify a union from claiming legal immunity. Equally unsurprising was the court's threat to sequestrate the union's assets after Sealink claimed that picket lines against P&O at Dover, which their staff refused to cross, were in contempt of those injunctions.

Sequestration or threatened sequestration is perhaps the most coercive means open to the courts to secure unions' compliance with their orders. The judge's acceding to the Midland Bank's request for an order freezing the NUS's account *before* any order for sequestration was made may have been novel but it points up just how extensive judicial discretion is in these matters.

The dispute has, however, broken new legal ground in a rather more serious way. After negotiations had failed to resolve its dispute with P&O European Ferries (formerly Townsend Thoresen), the NUS decided in March to ballot its members on a national strike over the general decline in conditions in the industry.

Making strike ballots a pre-condition for legal immunity has proved to be a double-edged weapon. When such ballots come out in support of strike action they may significantly reinforce the union's position in a dispute. P&O and Sealink were able to prevent this happening by taking the issue back to court and arguing that the proposed strike would have been in contempt of the February injunctions. The judge agreed, describing the ballot as "an ingenious but ingenuous attempt to get around the law". It remains to be seen if future judges will effectively prevent unions from holding strike ballots even where no earlier court order is in force, on the ground that industrial action which might take place after the ballot would not have immunity because it would fall foul of some aspect of the 1980s laws.

Even before the 1988 Employment Bill imposes new limits on the legality of industrial action, trade unions have little room for manoeuvre. If they seek legal advice they must invariably be told that they have little or no scope for any effective action within the law. On the other side, employers are now well aware that they can devise strategies for "restructuring", confident that they can use the law to help them overcome union opposition.

Bob Simpson

Bob Simpson is a senior lecturer in law at the London School of Economics.

POLITICAL SKETCH

The hand that locks the chair

Edward Pearce

HAVING WRITTEN about it elsewhere, I make no apology for returning to the topic of the Speakership and the state of play in the House of Commons. The assault on Bernard Weatherill which is already tentatively under way would, if it really got rolling, be a major affront to the rules by which the Commons and government coexist. But there is also a question of MPs' conduct which is not indeed the bottomless pit of atrocity which the tabloids allege but not exactly a bed of lobelias either.

Something *does* have to be done about the Ron Brown syndrome. A letter to the *Guardian* after the funeral of Harry McShane said that, while thanks are due to Eric Heffer for his kind words, nobody should be in any doubt of Harry's bottomless contempt for the so-called parliamentary road to socialism. Predictably it goes on to say that while Harry never actually *joined* the WRP, nevertheless. . .

There is a species of manic sectarianism which readily translates into dog-kicking gestures, defiance of forms, the disowning of good manners as against the interests of the working class and a general willingness to do things which the *Daily Mail* will want to report on its front page.

The occasional polite refusal to retract a seriously meant allegation leading to suspension in the Commons may be reasonable, witness the courtly Tam Dalyell. But most of the sort of behaviour leading to suspension is crude egotistical boorishness. There are people who claim to have a soft spot for Dennis Skinner. Having listened for years to that rambling stage proletarian monotone, like the late Al Reed under sedation, I am not among them. As for Ron Brown, he gives as good an impression of somebody not quite in his perfect mind as one cares to watch. How does someone as witlessly uncomprehending as that, a half wound-up noise-making mechanism, come to be selected in the first place? If people on the left do not comprehend that Ron Brown is pure Conservative rapture they understand nothing. If Labour has moved at last, it has moved late. But at least Neil Kinnock seems to have communicated his own rage at a victory spoiled to a Whips' Office which suffers terribly from the necessity of winning its own elections. Democracy is wonderful but you don't elect the sergeant major.

However, that established, it should be clear that the knives which are being polished for the Speaker have nothing to do with Ron Brownery, though it provides wonderful cover. What the Prime Minister personally resents is that this Speaker is not the flunkey she wants and which, in cringeing George Thomas, she had. "Best Speaker since the war, George," said a Tory whip to me at the time. From this point of view he was perfectly correct. Thomas approached Mrs Thatcher in much the same spirit as he once hailed the passage of the Queen Mother down his street in Wales. "Mam and me didn't have a flag to hand so we grabbed a dishrag and waved it." It delighted Thomas to protect government, to interpret Private Notice Questions as disloyal irrelevancies to be disallowed, and generally to render unto Caesar everything Caesar had a mind to. His prideless toadying partisanship of government was a public scandal.

MRS THATCHER knew Jack Weatherill to be a humanitarian with warm respect for his opponents when he was a Conservative MP. She knew that he would not, as the saying goes, "look after us". Weakness might be alleged (wrongly), though what she disliked from the start was a parliamentary rather than a party cast of mind. She was right. PNQs are back where they should be, a major legitimate instrument of Opposition probing and, to the rage of the government, an emergency debate was granted in respect of the Moore review of benefits.

Its outcome of course justifies the Speaker's course of action ninety and nine times. As a result of that debate, the Opposition certainly put its case (and apart from the ass Nellist did extremely well), but public opinion was also expressed through the mails. For heaven's sake, even *Conservative* opinion was expressed. The whole thing was wonderful. Parliament actually began to function and it did so by focusing a public discontent and articulating it. This would have been just as true if the government had made a brilliant case against the strictures and emerged unscathed. Issues actually turned for once upon rational debate. We were at the furthest remove from the instincts of Margaret Thatcher and Ron Brown, a great place to be.

So of course the Speaker is being black-spotted and having his unconsulted resignation floated. The murmur is that co-operation could be withdrawn from him. The idea, I suspect, would be to advance Betty Boothroyd, whose sex would stifle criticism from many people and whose dislike of dissent "would set a good example". It would then hardly matter what Betty Boothroyd's own inclination in the Chair were. She would have been appointed as a punishment for the last Speaker and a volley of grapeshot fired into the Commons. It is important that Betty should understand this.

It is equally important that everyone who cares about such things, including many Conservatives, should understand what the lynching of a non-authoritarian Speaker means. Government already controls far too many levers. Frank Field has rightly denounced the growth of office — 90 jobs where 60 would suffice. On the same principle, I would like to see a crusade undertaken against political honours, curtailed by Edward Heath, hung up like fairy lights by Our Lady. But if the one appointment which parliament makes (as Mrs Thatcher had to be reminded last time) were to be wrecked by whips instructed by a Prime Minister so that a compliant Speaker might be appointed and executive power underlined one fourteenth time more, the joke would be a sick one at the expense of democracy.

But she is following a dangerous, unconstitutional, improper course which could be most dangerous to *her*. What matters is that we should stay alert to disgraceful intentions and turn the lights on. Tyranny is best pre-empted by being spotted early.

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Remand prisoners: the case of Mark Lewis

ON 18 NOVEMBER, Mark Lewis was arrested on a charge of cannabis possession. Since that date, he has been imprisoned in no fewer than five different prison, police, and court cells across the country. The latest is situated in Birmingham's central lock-up, Steelhouse Lane — 105 miles from north London, where Lewis was arrested and must be tried. His trial was scheduled for last week. But because Legal Aid does not automatically cover the travel costs of his barrister and solicitor, the distance has led to delays. His trial has now been postponed until June.

Prison overcrowding is not new. But for the London metropolitan area's remand prisoners, its cumulative effects are severe. By one prison officer's estimate, well over a thousand remand prisoners a week find themselves "locked out" of London prisons. Returning from weekly remand appearances at court, these prisoners find that their places have been filled by new arrivals. A spokesman at the Home Office blamed individual action at Wormwood Scrubs and Wandsworth prisons for the current overcrowding crisis. Although two army barracks have been converted to detention centres, the six or seven hundred places which they will provide for convicted prisoners will barely alleviate current overcrowding.

Scotland Yard has created a Mutual Aid Coordination Centre to cope with the overflow of remand prisoners, but the brunt of the problem has fallen on Lambeth Holding Centre, the unit officially responsible for coordinating the transport of remand prisoners to and from magistrates' courts. Prison officers at the centre have been saddled with the monumental task of finding and allocating cell-space for over a thousand prisoners a week. They are being sent to police and court lock-ups in Wales, the Midlands, and the north of England. The cells are not designed for long-term stays. Most have insufficient facilities for washing and exercise, poor lighting, and the police staff who guard them have no training as jailors.

Steelhouse Lane, where Mark Lewis has been imprisoned for the past five weeks, was described by West Midlands Police Superintendent Martin Burton as "horrendous, squalid, unfit for police officers to work in. The building is 100 years old and totally obsolete. Apart from electricity and water, there's been no update since Victorian times." Sixteen of the lock-up's 39 prisoners are from Greater London. Although a police spokesman said that the lock-up was operating under full capacity, Mark Lewis, whom I spoke to by telephone (as a concession, because of their distance from relatives and solicitors, prisoners are allowed to receive short telephone calls), said conditions were bad.

In the "annexe", a set of eight cells where out of town prisoners are confined, men are living two to a cell designed for one. While one person sleeps on the cell's "bench" or bed, the other sleeps on a mattress on the floor. Apart from an "internal area" for exercise, there are no exercise facilities. Lewis said that he had not seen daylight for five weeks — when he was last taken to court. Prisoners are let out of their cells for an average of two hours a day, to use sinks and toilets (there are toilets in their cells but these cannot be flushed), and to watch television. There are no facilities for cleaning clothes: on their weekly visits, Lewis's girlfriend and parents bring fresh laundry as well as toothpaste and soap.

Mark Lewis has been visited by his barrister once. He last spoke to his solicitor on the telephone four or five weeks ago. Although his solicitor, Mr Humphrys of James Morton & Co., praised the facilities at Steelhouse Lane as "first rate" — referring particularly to his client's accessibility by telephone — the distance had made the delay of his trial inevitable. "We've made complaints to the central holding office, but they say they can't post him to London — there's no room."

Mark Lewis will have served seven months' imprisonment before he is tried on the charges that have been made against him. Taxpayers take note: the cost of maintaining a remand prisoner in a police cell is £163 per day, an amount which covers extra police hours and transport costs. At over £1,000 per week, that makes a week's stay at one of London's prisons at £250 seem positively modest by comparison.

Amy Gamerman

West Enders
IT'S NOT THAT I'M OBJECTING TO THIS PROGRAMME FOR ANY PERSONAL REASON...
...IT'S NOT THAT IT DEMONSTRATES QUITE CLEARLY THAT I TOLD BIG PORKY PIES TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS. IT'S NOT THAT AT ALL. NOBODY WORRIES ABOUT THAT SORT OF THING ANYMORE...
YOU SEEM AGITATED, GEOFFREY. HAVE YOU RUN OUT OF MOGADON?
IT'S BECAUSE IT'S TRIAL BY TELEVISION, AND WE ALL KNOW THAT'S INFINITELY WORSE THAN TRIAL, JUDGEMENT AND EXECUTION BY IMPARTIAL+INDEPENDENT S.A.S.MAN. IT'S A QUITE CRUCIAL CONSTITUTIONAL POINT!!!
QUITE. BUT THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE WORRYING YOU, GEOFF - YOU'RE SHAKING!!!
DAMMIT, THERE IS!!! IT'S BLOODY MARGARET AND HER COURTESY DRIVE!!!
SHE'S COMMANDED THAT WE RETURN TO THE 'COURTEST CULTURE' OF THE PRE-PERMISSIVE AGE. IT'S LUDICROUS!! SHE WORRIES ME, DOUG!!
Daily Mail
SAS MAN "RAISED HIS HAT" BEFORE SHOOTING WOMAN IN NECK SURPRISE
I'LL RE-PHRASE THAT - THE BLOODY WOMAN TERRIFIES ME!! IT'S HER EYES I THINK!!
CALM DOWN, GEOFF - TELL ME ABOUT IT!
CLINK
SHAKE
HOWE-DRUG LINK SHOCK
THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE ISN'T THERE GEOFFREY?? COME ON - TELL ME WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND.....
SHE... SHE.... SHE'S HAD THE HAT OF DEATH ON AGAIN!!!
...SHE HAD THE BLOODY HAT OF DEATH ON AND SHE LOOKED ME STRAIGHT IN THE EYE!! I CAN TELL YOU MY BLOOD RAN COLD, DOUGLAS!!
CHRIST OLD MAN! PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER!
I THINK YOU NEED A HOLIDAY, GEOFFREY... STAND UP WHEN I TALK TO YOU!!!
HOWE-NICE GIRLS SEX-FOR-SALE LINK
SOMEWHERE WARM, SOMEWHERE YOU CAN RELAX .... I HEAR THAT GIBRALTAR'S VERY PLEASANT AT THIS TIME OF YEAR. NICE COURTEOUS BOBBIES, VERY POLITE. JUST LIKE HOME!
SHE HAD THAT 'I WANT BLOOD' LOOK! I COULD FEEL IT!!!
NONSENSE OLD MAN! YOUR IMAGINATION'S RUNNING AWAY WITH YOU!

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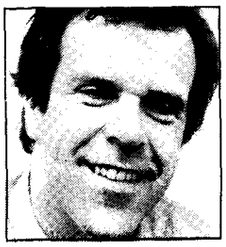

JOHN LLOYD

The seafarers are helpless against the puissance of the capitalist revival

THE P&O dispute cannot be *won* by the National Union of Seamen: the forces arrayed against it are too great to allow that. At best, the union may avoid being broken by the dispute, though it must be odds on that it will be badly damaged.

The company is big and rich enough to sustain a long strike. P&O European Ferries, formerly Townsend Thoresen, accounts for only some 4 per cent of net profits: losses from the strike so far are reckoned below £5m on revenue, against which must be offset savings on unpaid wages. P&O has already sacked layers of management and closed the former group headquarters: its senior management is united, and strongly led by Sir Jeffrey Sterling, the company chairman and an adviser to Lord Young, the Industry Secretary. P&O has a trump in not being in the least dependent on the European Ferries operation, and thus being willing to close it down or sell it in extremis.

The union, by contrast, has nowhere else to go. Its 7,000 members on ferries constitute the hard core of its membership, estimated at 18,000. Deep sea membership has been savagely cut, especially in the 1980s, as UK-owned lines "flagged out" to Panama, Liberia and other wage-cutting havens: there, free in one bound from the crewing and pay agreements extant between the British shipping board and the NUS, the country's mobile maritime capitalists employ Filipino, Sri Lankan or Polish crews and junior officers, put in a British captain and two or three senior officers, and cut wage costs by sometimes up to two thirds.

A strike in the deep sea fleets — some of which, like bulk carriers, still remain substantially British flagged — would stimulate an instant flight to convenience ports: while if P&O succeeds in running and extending its ferry services without recognising the NUS, it would breach the only solid wall the NUS has left. Industrial action against a formidably strong company is further crimped by legislation which does not permit of any secondary action (see Bob Simpson p7): the case successfully taken against the NUS earlier this week by Sealink on just these grounds has seen the union's meagre funds sequestrated — a move the union has seemed almost to welcome in a last-throw bid to rouse its national membership to action in its union's defence.

The union has a case good enough — in other times or in other countries — to command respect. The company terms, revised in sessions at ACAS, stipulate a 24-hour duty period in which 14 hours are expected to be worked "under normal operational circumstances": however, abnormal circumstances will be defined by the officers and could lead to a theoretical extension of work to 24 hours. Ratings are to work 122 days a year (on the Zeebrugge and Boulogne runs) and 187 half days (on the Calais run), with 243 days and 543 half days off respectively. Generous (generous enough to run another job or business, as some of the crew are reported to have done): but no distinction is made between weekends, bank holidays and "normal" holidays, so that crew members could find themselves unable to take more than a week off at a time. The revised working patterns have safety implications which deserve closer examination than they have received, while the union's suspicion that the company may be planning to maximise its profits until the Channel Tunnel opens, then cut and run, may well be right.

THE NUS is experiencing what its leaders must have known: that a culture of wider support for union action among other workers is now greatly weakened, however that industrial action is played; that cost-cutting strategies like that on which P&O is now embarked can command at least passive support quite widely; and that, crucially, the assumption that union action stood in an undefined way for a wider progressivism is now received much more sceptically in every political constituency.

> *'The coincidence of high profitability, resurgent business confidence, tax cuts and the retreat of labour and the public authorities has given private capital the space to exercise its own form of social engineering'*

Part of that, of course, is simply a continuation of union decline: figures published in the *FT* earlier this week showed that that decline was fairly steep among the manual workers who constituted the core of union members, and that this was the case even in those regions — like Scotland — where membership had been most solid.

This is of course a worldwide picture. In most developed countries, union membership is tending to fall, and where union membership is static or even rising slightly — as in Scandinavian countries — it is because the experience of corporatism, in which the state, capital and labour co-operate successfully to run the economy and agree social structures, continues to be generally good. We have not had a generally favourable impression of corporatism since the 1950s: indeed, it is arguable we have never had a successful corporatism at all, since the two main social partners have never cared to develop the structures needed to command their own members especially when agreement is against the individual interest of some of them. Since we did not have that to turn to, we were open to a radical right.

As the NUS dispute gathered pace earlier this week, a terribly important effect of that radical government blossomed forth in the precincts of the Palace of St James. The British American Conference on Private Sector Initiatives gathered more than 100 chief executives from the UK and the US in Lancaster House: it turned out to be a certain kind of celebration.

In part it was a celebration of two pasts: a distant past, in the latter half of the 19th century, in which business people exercised their energies across the boundary separating their business from the wider society, in which they acted (as the Prime Minister put it) as "city fathers" as well as industrial and commercial entrepreneurs; in which charitable giving was an extension of an unselfconscious social concern which went with the job of industrial magnate. The more recent past was the last five years, in which that spirit had again become evident: as business returned to the cities and business people again began putting out feelers to "communities" — this new, ironic concept which describes fragmentation — to see how far they can be ushered in once more under the wing of trade and industry.

BUT THE MOST important part of the celebration was about the future. The chief executives had found themselves energised by a new power: the power to do good, to find that doing good does the company good and that doing good means the ability to reshape urban, social and educational systems. As the scope of the public authorities is being cut back by the British and American governments (and not just them), so the opportunity for the dominant actor in the "private" world — corporate capital — steps with increasing self-confidence on to the public stage.

It is essential to be sceptical about all of this. A glossy view of history will do little for the present and the future, while the kind of resources which business will feel constrained to donate to the "communities" cannot match government cuts to social services, or the scale of devastation caused by a large plant closing. The agendas which business will expect to see implemented in town halls, schools and on the streets may be dynamic but will not be democratic: the evacuation of the social sphere by public authorities cannot be achieved without a loss to the public interest.

But it will happen. In the UK, the coincidence now of high profitability, resurgent business confidence, tax cuts and the retreat of labour and the public authorities has given private capital the space to exercise its own form of social engineering. It is doing so already, in such agreements as the London Compact — where businesses take school leavers who have met certain criteria they have helped set. That was developed with the cooperation of the Inner London Education Authority: other deals have been set up in Sheffield and, up and down the country, left-wing authorities as well as right are turning to the private sector for a range of skills and expertise they have not cared to develop and now cannot afford.

We are living through a capitalist revival: not just of profitability, but of confidence, power and reach. We have yet to develop an ethic to counterpose it. None are likely to know that better, in the weeks ahead, than the Dover seafarers. □

Ben Pimlott is ill. We hope he will be back next week.

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MR NASTY

Norman Tebbit flogs a dead horse

SARAH BENTON *on a basically unserious politician, all dressed up in "radical" clothes but with nowhere to go*

IF SOCIALISM is dead, why does Norman Tebbit have to keep on kicking its corpse? It is possible that, like the true fascists of Nazi Germany, he is irresistibly drawn to death and making things dead. But, as Tebbit is not a fascist, why bother with such speculation? He needs his enemies to retain some semblance of life because without them to attack he has no political future.

In his inaugural speech to the Radical Society he offered a suitably macabre compromise: the death of socialism had advanced to its brain-stem, but left its limbs still twitching. Mr Tebbit does not want to be the one to switch off its "life-support machine", the trade unions, Labour councils and "backward African states" which throng his imagination. His would be a blank landscape without them crawling around doing evil. A trawl through his recent speeches as the man who dares go where faint-heart Tories lag behind produces chunks of rude passages on enemies old and new, but hardly a single idea for what is to be done. It is Norman Tebbit's kick which keeps bygone lefties twitching.

The recorded words of Norman Tebbit, with their frequent imagery of violence, decay and death, make him an easy figure to caricature. Like the born-again Christians whose denunciations of bodily lusts are delivered with a lascivious knowingness, Tebbit's imagery of bodily death and decay suggests a fascinated repulsion with things of the body. (Cooking cream, he once wrote, "leaves me slightly neurotic at the thought of curdled lumps in the sauce...") Yet in the flesh he is not a simple brute and he has many admirers who stress his charm and humour. His appearance, with his wide eyes, lean body and pale flesh, seems ascetic rather than thuggish. His voice, which never seems to lose its sneer, can be gentle and almost seductive. His most offensive thrusts are always made with a disarming smile. One of his closest colleagues says: "His delivery gives a different meaning to cold print. He's a masterful deliverer of a joke."

Much savage cruelty is passed off as "just a joke". The joke permits cruelty and acquits the joke-maker of responsibility. Not the quality of a leader or statesman. Norman Tebbit attacks through ridicule and with a laugh in order to diminish his laughable opponent and disclaim any malign intent. Is it Mr Tebbit's printed words which mislead, or his attitude of a supplicant dog? He mischievously bites you in the ankle, sits back with wide eyes and wagging tail — "I'm a good boy at heart" — then trots off to savage the kittens. It is the weakness in an opponent which excites a classic Tebbit attack, not the strength. No broadsides against socialism as such when it was alive and well; it was the insidious, parasitical marxists and sociologists he went for then. And for all the vaunted readiness of Conservative "Radicals" to take on the "big boys", none has ever attacked the power of employers in relation to workers. It is the organisations of the rich not the poor which have grown stronger under "revolutionary" Conservatism.

Norm: "Have you heard the one about the bishop and the rotting corpse of socialism?"

There is no mistaking the motor of an unusual aggression in Tebbit's politics. In a premature political obituary ("from now on we shall hear less about him") in November last year, Brian Walden wrote: "He is one of the most important figures British politics has produced this century, yet rarely has a man been so maligned and underrated." Those who once dismissed him as unintelligent and humourless have now had to revise their opinions, wrote Mr Walden, last seen launching the Radical Society with Mr Tebbit. If his poor reputation lives on, decided Walden, it must be explained by snobbery.

Withered without light

Snobbery and the end of deference has become one of Tebbit's main themes in his rebirth as the Conservative conscience. He retired from the chairmanship of the Conservative Party last November, his special relationship with Mrs T ruptured by the general election. He took on five

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Above this din came the voice of Tory MP Norman Tebbit shouting "Liar, liar, lousy liar" at Sam Silkin, Attorney General. In 1979 MPs alleged that he called for Arthur Latham, Labour MP, to be run down by a car. This was mere "bandage", said Tebbit later, in an interesting slip

directorships of top companies, and said he was going to write his memoirs and spend more time with his wife. He withered with the lack of limelight. Within a few weeks he was back, forming a brief alliance with rival Michael Heseltine to bounce Kenneth Baker into abolishing the Inner London Education Authority. He's hardly missed the headlines in any week since then, as he's manoeuvred to establish his role as the guardian of Conservative "radicalism". His appetite for being the centre of attention is insatiable, his instinct for getting there with the hurtful insult as powerful as ever.

Sometimes his instinct backfires. In once of his headline-grabbers this year he attacked nurses for "moonlighting". Nurses turned on him pointing out his five "moonlighting" directorships and his reliance on moonlighting nurses to care for his wife. Usually his insults attack monsters due to die or point out that men are not real men and women not real women. His long gallery of targets since his new backbench role includes ILEA ("that overgrown, over-priced, over-political monster [which] will soon be gone"), Prince Charles for not doing a real man's job, Neil Kinnock ("a boy trying to do a man's job"), "our European friends" for being "dangerously weak" towards terrorists, women who call themselves "Ms" (an "unattractive designation of frequently unattractive women"), Labour councillor Mandy Mudd (unfit to be a teacher because she was once a stripogram girl), NUPE's Rodney Bickerstaffe (who "suffers like all weak men who want to show off their strength"), the cast of *EastEnders*, worrying about "their next abortion" or "their sex change operation", and a varied assortment of "windbags" and "wimp politicians".

New new man

In his fulsome tribute, Brian Walden saw Tebbit as the embodiment of our age, the "new man" who is "very conscious that since the first world war Britain has been quietly rotting from the head down". (The imagery is infectious.) Yet it was not as a prophet for a new, civilised Britain that Tebbit first came to public attention. He was narrowly elected MP for Epping in 1970. He gained some small publicity by comments on air safety. But what lifted him out of the ranks of the obscure was his announcement to the press in 1972 that he had written some "rather brutal letters" (his words) to Prime Minister Heath on the subject of Ugandan Asians. He followed this up by delivering to his leader a letter from the Waltham Forest Conservative Association demanding the immediate repatriation of all Ugandan Asians. Furthermore, all aid to Uganda should be cut, there should be no further rise in immigration and, in a foretaste of his populist language, "we should not ask the people to allow foreigners to displace them..."

We shall not know until Tebbit publishes his memoirs (sold, as yet unwritten, to Weidenfeld last autumn for £200,000 plus) exactly how he spent the mid 1970s. But it was then that he made his reputation as "the Chingford skinhead". The man who, this March, condemned Labour in parliament for sinking into "hooliganism" and has a keen nose for "stinking hypocrisy" in others, has a short memory for his own past. By 1974 Labour MPs are crying "get back to the gutter" at him when he makes a typically snide attack on Harold Wilson for his lack of military experience (ie, was not a real man in the war). In 1975 the *Guardian* reports a parliamentary row about Clay Cross: "Above this din came the voice of Tory MP Norman Tebbit shouting 'Liar, liar, lousy liar'" at Sam Silkin, Attorney General (liar is a word forbidden in parliament). In 1977 there is the notorious incident when he is alleged to have shouted at Labour MP Tom Litterick "Why don't you go and have another heart attack?" (Litterick later died of a further heart attack.) In 1979, in a debate on run-down inner cities, MPs allege that Tebbit called for Arthur Latham, Labour MP, to be run down by a car. This was mere "bandage", said Tebbit later, in an interesting slip of the tongue. His disorderly behaviour in parliament was acknowledged by the right too. "He made a point of being generally and genuinely offensive to ministers of all shapes and sizes," said the *Daily Mail* in 1979. He used to "lurk around Question Times hoping to mug some helpless minister," commented the *Daily Telegraph* the same year.

Secret 1970s plans

Violence certainly attracted Norman Tebbit, and brought him new contacts, in the mid 1970s. At the time when, according to Peter Wright, the secret services were plotting to overthrow Harold Wilson, Norman Tebbit was one of a group of right-wing Tories who had drawn up "secret plans" for a national volunteer force to combat civil disorder. The scheme was thought up by far-right, aging Tory Harold Gurden, MP for Selly Oak. The curious Colonel Stirling, who had set up "Great Britain 1975", one of a number of new, semi-secret, semi-military organisations set up then to combat marxist trade unionists, dismissed it as a task beyond MPs. This was the time when several Labour MPs and supporters, including Harold Wilson, Edward Short, John Stonehouse and Peter Hain, alleged that they were the victims of dirty tricks, some of them orchestrated by South Africans. It was always Norman Tebbit who rose in the House to demand proof of such "smears", confident that such proof could not be found and the complainers would be shown to be "liars". A year ago Tam Dalyell alleged in parliament that Norman Tebbit and Airey Neave were implicated in the secret plot to unseat Wilson. The allegations were denied with outrage.

If Tebbit is looking for new forces to propel him and his politics into the future, he is not going to find them among party members. Will he find them in the Radical Society? Unlikely. He claims that his zeal for radical reform is strong but nowhere specifies what form this should take

It was in this period that the web of the New Conservatism was created, with its mix of anti-communism, paranoid antagonism to marxism and trade unions, its links to extra-party right-wing groups, its espousal of free market economics, support for small businesses and its cultivation of the party itself as a new "anti-snobbish" force. The distinctive theme of 1980s conservatism, popular ownership, was *not* among its founding premises.

These new groupings are crucial, for without them neither Norman Tebbit nor Margaret Thatcher could have forced aside the old Tory establishment. But these were elite, if not secretive, organisations. It was the party that was the populist force, and here the linked pulses of racism and passion for law and order were vital.

But those days are over. Norman Tebbit is no longer rooted in circles which complain endlessly about immigrants and black muggers nor is he the Leader's favourite boy. If he is looking for *new* forces to propel him and his politics into the future he is not going to find them among party members. Will he find them in the Radical Society? Unlikely. He may still want the limelight, but his days of serving a cause are over. He claims that this zeal for radical reform is still strong, but nowhere in his long speech to the Radical Society did he specify what form this should take. He spent his words on an historical overview of how the socialist consensus had risen and fallen, and how "public delusion" (one of his better slips; he meant disillusion) had introduced Thatcherism. For the future, he referred to the need to reform the NHS and local government finance. No headlines there.

What are the ambitious men of the 1990s, who are not at home in the Conservative Party, who cannot now look to the hegemony of the SDP, to do? They form a Society which, as Stephen Haseler (co-founder of the Radical Society) says, will be like the Fabian Society, only instead of creating the hegemony of collectivist ideas it will establish those of the market. Merit and enterprise will rule, paternalism and deference will be overthrown.

These men (there was not a woman on the platform to launch the society that represents the new political era) wish to be the leaders of this new politics and have created their own organisation in which to do that. All are men who dislike the left intensely but cannot, despite their histories, let go the idea that they are the leaders of progress. But what languages will they speak? Tebbit stressed the Conservative achivement of "depoliticising decision-making". Radical Society material carefully avoids the language of politics with its inevitable reference to accountability, democracy, rights, justice — equality even. They talk of the role of the market, rather than of the state, which is the site on which any new political consensus must be founded. But the party in whose wake they are washing insists that politics must be depoliticised. Its leaders insist they have made a revolution in which the people have played no active part. For the citizen they have substituted the consumer.

If Norman Tebbit is comfortable in this environment it is because he has no political role to play. □

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EXCLUSIVE

Sex and vice exposé: 'make it up'

JOLYON JENKINS *reveals how the gutter press operates*

DAVID SULLIVAN, the porno king and proprietor of *Sunday Sport* (the newspaper which discovered you could scrape *beneath* the barrel), isn't the only Fleet Street newspaper owner to expect his staff to make up stories. But he may be the only one to put his instructions in writing. A remarkable internal memorandum from Sullivan, giving a unique insight into the kind of operation he likes to run, has been obtained by the *New Statesman*.

The five-page document is headed "Vice Explosion in London — to run over 6+ weeks over 2/3 pages". It's a proposal to run a classic tabloid "vice exposé" series in the newspaper, and to economise on reporters' time by fabricating where necessary. Here are some extracts:

"RUB PARLOURS/MASSAGE PARLOURS
We'll actually visit several establishments (say three) — proper tape up job with recorders etc. GO FOR CHEAPEST SERVICE ON THE DESK. At most places offering full sex, as well as French and hand relief. Full details on what girls wearing, noises from other cubicles etc . . . To give the owners an out (avoid writs) might say we were unable to contact the owners for a comment — indeed they might not know what is going on. We'd love to hear from them and we'll give them a right of reply.

"ESCORT AGENCIES (One genuine one and make a few up?)

"TOP CLASS MADAMS
e.g. Leila, Cassy, Claire — see me

"CONTACT MAGAZINE GIRLS
Can be done mainly over the phone — though if their flat is a 'working flat' in the Bayswater type area we'll print the actual address. (My pal runs a lot of these we'll get all names, addresses of him but leave him out.)

"GIRLS WHO COME TO ENGLAND TO 'WORK'
As prostitution is not illegal in Britain (in America it is) girls come from all over the world to work. A few ficticious [sic] interviews here."

Cosmetic breast surgery also appeals to Sullivan as a fruitful subject for a feature — it's "an excuse for 3/4 shots of models that have had boob jobs and 3 girls that have not. However, don't mix up captions and girls or we'll have writs coming at us in all directions . . . YOU CAN GET THE MEDICAL BACKGROUND, FACTS, DIFFERENT METHODS OF BOOB JOBS ETC from a pal of mine who lives with a guy who owns plastic surgery clinics (we'll get him to advertise the week the piece comes out). THIS WOULD MAKE AN IDEAL CENTRESPREAD." Despite his contacts in the industry, Sullivan doesn't have all the facts to hand, but adopts his customary solution: "Last year X,000 woman had boob jobs in the UK and Y,000 in the USA. (If you can't find out the real figures say 30,000 in the UK and 325,000 in the USA)."

'A fleet of call girls'

By page four the document has degenerated into feverish anecdotes about the alleged sexual proclivities of "Arab princes" and top businessmen. Sullivan names the companies in the memo but advises against doing so in the paper ("not worth a libel suite [sic]"). For example:

"In a recent trip to America to buy racehorses the Royal Family from a major Arab state hired a fleet of Call girls from New York — sending their plane to collect them — the ones they didn't like were sent away with $2,000.

"Many top British companies hire call girls a leading British shipping/Express delivery company have hired call girls to expand their business . . . They pay £500 a day flying girls to Geneva, Bahrain and Australia. On a recent trip the air hostesses were curious why such a large number of pretty girls were all travelling together. They all gave different replies till one girl at the top of her voice replied: 'we are fucking call girls — what the f . . . do you think we are?" There was a stoney silence for the rest of the trip . . .

"Another Arab 'Royal' has Call girls six at a time, lines them up . . ." (On second thoughts, this one falls outside the acceptable limits of taste.)

Sullivan sees quite clearly that there is a tension (to say the least) between making a living from publishing hard core pornography and running a journalistic exposé on vice. He tries to circumvent this by offloading responsibility onto the individual journalist and editor. He urges: "make it quite moralistic — though say we are NOT out to castigate individuals . . . you have to be pretty moralistic to justify publishing this piece. But I'd like boxed off next to every piece this publishers comment (improve grammar or change in any way you like)."

Sullivan's "disclaimer" is a fascinating statement of his personal philosophy and politics. It runs as follows (grammar and spelling unchanged):

"Most Sunday papers take a highly moralistic view in judging prostitution. Indeed this is the stance take by our reporter — one of Fleet Streets most experienced investagory journalists. He is fully entitled to his opinion and it is this papers policy to allow reporters to publish there opinions uncensored by either the publisher or edoitor. However, as the publisher I would like to say that prostitution is not illegal in Britain . . . and in many ways prostitutes provide for a need in society and in some ways provide an almost social service. Indeed, it might be argued that it is better for them to make a living in this way than sponge of the country via Social Security payments. HOWEVER, I do feel they should be controlled — I feel they should pay VAT and Tax like any other business, be the subject of REGULAR MEDICAL CHECKUPS (particularly with the spread of such diseases as Aids) and operate in Red Light areas from Licenced premises . . . WHAT DO YOU THINK READERS — send your letters to READERS LETTERS, SUNDAY SPORT."

We were unable to contact David Sullivan for a comment — indeed he might not know what is going on. We'd love to hear from him and we'll give him a right of reply. WHAT DO YOU THINK READERS? □

Loadsa sport, page after page of sport. Also racing, boxing, snooker. And a bit of news, some of it true

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Uncomfortable lesson for the left

YVONNE ROBERTS *on what the Burnage report really says about racism in schools*

ONE MONDAY, eighteen months ago, Darren Coulburn, a 13-year-old white pupil at Burnage High School in Manchester, punched a younger Asian boy in the mouth. Darren had a history of bullying, disruptive behaviour, and the previous year, after burning down the school's art block, he appeared in juvenile court. Ahmed Iqbal Ullah, also 13, saw Darren's attack and successful intervened, humiliating the white boy.

A day later, Darren challenged Ahmed to a fight; Ahmed won. On Wednesday, the two boys clashed again and this time, Darren stabbed Ahmed in the stomach. A few minutes later, Darren was seen by fourth and fifth year boys, at the gates of the upper school, running around, disturbed, shouting, "I've killed a Paki . . ."

A year ago, an independent panel was set up by Manchester City Council. It was to hear evidence in camera, judge whether Ahmed's murder had been a racist attack and investigate racial violence in all Manchester schools. The panel consisted of Ian Macdonald, a barrister with expertise in immigration and race relations law; Lily Khan, director of Asian studies at Tower Hamlets Adult Education Institute in London; Reena Bhavnani, tutor in sociology at Ruskin College, Oxford; and Gus John, assistant education officer in the Inner London Education Authority and one of the founders of the Black Parents Movement. "One left-wing lawyer and three blacks," was one comment when the committee was announced. "You could write the report now." That view has since been proven wrong.

The 120,000-word report was finished in February, but Manchester City Council delayed publication. The panel feared that if the report was leaked, biased media coverage would damage the very clear analysis which the report makes. And that is exactly what happened.

"Condemned," read the *Daily Mail*'s front page last Tuesday, alongside a picture of the headteacher of Burnage High School for five years, Dr Gerry Gough: "Anti-racist head who led his school to disaster". "The Burnage Report," announced the *Daily Mail*'s leader, " . . . is the autopsy of an obsession." On the previous day, a précis of the leaked report had been published in the *Manchester Evening News*. On Sunday, the *Sunday Times*, in a partial and ill-informed piece, managed to pin the blame for Ahmed's death not on the racist society in which he lived, as described in the report, but on the existence of anti-racist policies — the antidote therefore becomes the "sickness".

The death of a boy has thus been used to try to bury a policy which might still be the only salvation of any number of children, black and white.

PA

Ahmed Iqbal Ullah: his death used to try to bury *any* anti-racist policy

The tragedy is that the real significance of the Macdonald inquiry has been overlooked. The inquiry found that the school was badly managed, there was an "ethos of male violence", racial attacks were common and black pupils and the tiny number of black staff felt isolated. The panel discribed the anti-racist policies as implemented at Burnage as "an unmitigated disaster". However, far from abandoning them, Macdonald suggests a number of ways they can be injected with new and much more radical life.

Fans of the report (due finally to be published next week) such as the *Mail* have made no comment on those parts which advocate what would amount to a revolution in the way in which schools are run. A revolution which would benefit not just disadvantaged black pupils but white working-class children as well. "What we need," says Gus John, "is a new alliance."

White highlands

Britain has 3½-4 million immigrants. In only a small number of cities are there schools where Asian and/or Afro-Caribbean pupils make up the majority. In the main, in schools in the so-called "white highlands", white is the only colour of skin which is seen. In 1979, the Swann Committee (as it became) was set up, in part because of the discontent of black parents at the academic standards apparently out of reach of their children.

Swann reported three years ago. Its research revealed that many teachers were either openly or subconsciously racist. Many had low aspirations for their Afro-Caribbean and Asian students. Language difficulties were ignored and racism in the playground was common. To simplify, "the problem" had been the black child who did not progress academically. Swann moved the Establishment towards the realisation that the system not the child was at fault — as the government officially accepted.

The 1944 Education Act promises equality of opportunity for all. As a result, some form of anti-racist policy is not, as the *Daily Mail* insists, a "left-wing obsession" but a legal obligation. The policy has cross-party support in many local councils, such as Bradford where one child in four is Asian. "We are not engaged in social engineering or a political crusade," says Eric Pickles, Conservative chair of Bradford's education committee. "We are going about it in a typically traditional, boring northern way."

In 1981, only two of Britain's local education authorities had a policy on multiculturalism. Now, 80 have a commitment to multiculturalism and another half a dozen or so also have a policy on anti-racism (among them ILEA, Bradford, Birmingham and Avon). But what do these policies mean in practice?

In the sixties, one attitude found among headteachers was the "colour blind" approach. "Colour of the skin doesn't matter. I treat all my children the same." This approach, of course, ignores non-overt prejudice and allows no understanding of the individual child's roots. Multiculturalism, which followed, tried harder. Critics dismiss it as a token gesture — a matter of teaching white children how to cook chapatis in the cookery class and not much else. But it is an acknowledgement that the white Anglo-Saxon race isn't the only one present in a school.

"The 1944 Education Act promises equality of opportunity for all. As a result, some form of anti-racist policy is not, as the Daily Mail insists, a "left-wing obsession" but a legal obligation. The policy has cross-party support in many local councils, such as Bradford"

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Anti-racist policies, the next step advocated by Swann, have a much more root and branch intention. They acknowledge that racism is found in a Euro-centred (and for that matter male and middle-class) curriculum, and that it is also present in teachers' attitudes, teaching methods and training. Swann argued that " a fundamental re-orientation of values" was needed in all-white schools and those with black pupils alike, because all must learn to live in a multicultural society.

Ferret-eyed fascists

It is in the implementation of anti-racist policies, adopted in Manchester for several years, that the Macdonald inquiry found fault. In Burnage, the Macdonald panel came to the conclusion that white children and parents had been excluded from the anti-racist policies. What's more, these policies had been handed down to teachers and pupils without consultation. The result was "symbolic" or "moral" anti-racism, in which all white students are seen as racist "whether they are ferret-eyed fascists or committed anti-racists".

The inelegant handling of staff relations by the head teacher had also divided the staff into those for and against his policies. The policy ignored the complexity of school life and prevented white and black pupils from building on what they had in common. Anti-racism, argues Gus John, if it simply drives the bigot underground, has failed in its endeavour.

To counteract this, Macdonald argues that while a local authority should establish a framework for anti-racist practice, the details should be left to negotiations in schools between teachers, pupils and parents. Power in the classroom must devolve away from teachers and politicians. "If people have made a personal investment, then the commitment to see it through already exists," Gus John argues. In a couple of projects already in Manchester, such co-operation and reorganisation (and it can mean a massive change) are already proving a success. The panel has also put forward an imaginative way of cutting back on that breeding ground of white working-class prejudice which the *Daily Mail* tills so assiduously (helped along by some of the cock-ups of the dogmatic left, such as the handling of the Maureen McGoldrick affair).

> *The Burnage report has put forward an imaginative way of cutting back on that breeding ground of white working class prejudice which the Daily Mail tills so assiduously — helped by some of the cock-ups of the dogmatic left, such as the handling of the Maureen McGoldrick affair*

The *Daily Mail* line, first conveyed by Ray Honeyford, the Bradford headmaster, echoed by some of the Dewsbury parents, is that the presence of black children in a school "automatically" causes a decline in standards (research says otherwise) and a picture is painted of a syllabus in which "white British culture" is almost obliterated (a situation which exists not even in part in any school in the country).

White workers' roots

The Macdonald report suggests that you cannot teach black pupils about their roots and origins without providing a similar service to white working-class pupils (a proposal Mr Baker is bound to find if not subversive, then certainly indigestible). The panel heard the evidence of PEER, Parents English Education Rights, a group enamoured of Honeyford, and the report makes the following vital observation, again somehow overlooked by the *Daily Mail*: "One gets the sense of white working-class parents who have little basis on which to root their own identity and whose education has given them little or no conception of the value of their own experience as English working class.

"They, therefore, react angrily and resentfully to a school which, in sharp contrast to their own experience, caters directly for the needs and preferences of Asian students thus indicating the extent to which they and their culture are valued."

In 1985 Swann said the government needed to give a clear lead. Instead, Lady Hooper, Under Secretary of State for Education, said last year, responding to a question about the effects of parents opting out: "If it ends with a segregated system, then so be it."

Macdonald stands almost no chance of implementation, but at least the debate can begin. "Not everything that is faced can be changed," James Baldwin wrote, "but nothing can be changed until it is faced." □

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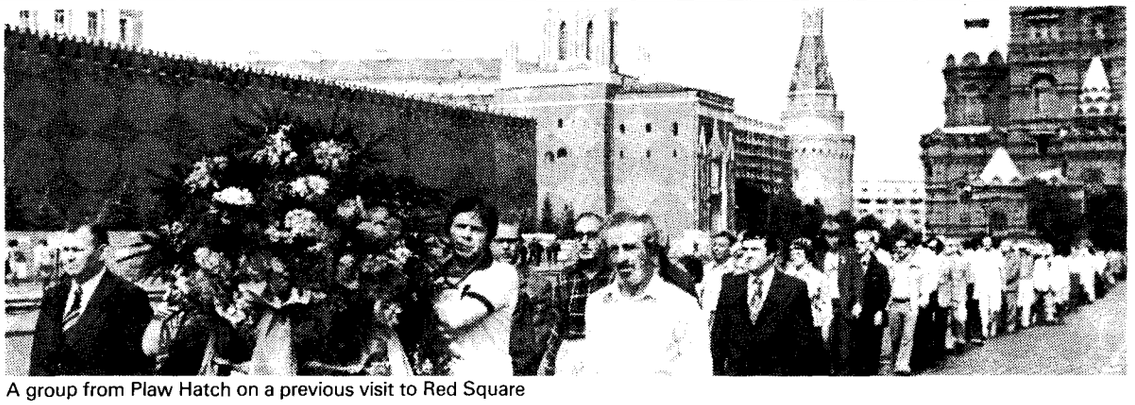

A group from Plaw Hatch on a previous visit to Red Square

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Perestroika: against pessimism

ANTHONY BARNETT *argues that the west should hope for Gorbachev's success without being naive, and fear for his failure without indulging in despair.*

On page 19 Sally Laird, from Moscow, on the enormity of the task of reform

WHAT IS happening in the Soviet Union will have a decisive influence on the future of socialism. The momentous nature of the developments in Moscow can hardly be overestimated. Their outcome will affect far more than the Soviet bloc or even superpower relations. What I find surprising is that it is necessary on the left to explain and justify such an estimate.

I recall Roy Hattersley saying, with a sigh, "I suppose we're all for Gorbachev now", and I compare this with the Prime Minister's uninhibited assertion that Gorbachev is attempting to "increase the sum of human freedom". A remark made before the world's press at RAF Brize Norton, after she met the Soviet General Secretary on his way to the Washington Summit last November. She had long recognised his reforms to be extraordinarily novel.

This difference in the intellectual energy level of the right extends beyond the politicians. The *Spectator* and the *Telegraph* demonstrate their fascination with the fact that reform in Moscow could alter political equations around the world. The Konigswinter Conference of the Anglo-German elite spends its key sessions debating the implications of *perestroika*. Yet among western, certainly British, socialists such self-confidence seems lacking in the face of the new.

On the whole, the left is embarrassed. It is embarrassed at the idea that change in the USSR might be successful; oh dear, that *would* involve re-thinking. It is embarrassed at the perhaps more likely possibility that reform will fail, to the discredit of socialism everywhere. Having burnt its fingers with Stalin and Khrushchev, it is more than twice shy of any fire in Moscow.

Change the world

Basically, it doesn't want to think about Russia. Another good whinge about the poll tax or the *contra* seems preferable to concern about change for the better — even incredibly courageous change that risks everything in the map of world politics.

Perhaps there are good reasons for that inhibition. Orwell bequeathed us a truthful prose in respect of international affairs, but one apparently inseparable from what I regard as this bleak and disabling pessimism from above. Against this, generations of sympathisers have pointed to Soviet achievements in an attempt to soften its failures, only to leave a taste of dissembling in the mouth. To consider sympathetically what is happening in the USSR means to hope for change without being naive, and to fear failure without indulging in despair.

To think about Russia is thus a question of language. Language as argument; language, therefore, in the most immediate, important and political sense; language because it encodes our relations with others. And on the central question of Russia, from its hollow slogans to the sacrifice of total belief, language is steeped in blood.

Blood is bad for truth. The victory over Nazism was to bring to the Kremlin a generation formed by the killing fields of collectivisation, crash industrialisation, and the Great Patriotic War. Brezhnev's generation. There is no need to dwell upon the massive, political regression that ensued. But there is a need to consider the international implications.

'On the whole, the left is embarrassed at the idea that change in the USSR might be successful; oh dear, that would involve re-thinking. It is embarrassed at the possibility that reform will fail, to the discredit of socialism everywhere. Having burnt its fingers with Stalin and Khrushchev, it is more than twice shy'

Because of its military and economic achievement against fascism, orthodox Communism commanded enormous prestige and following after 1945, both in Europe and in the colonies of the third world. Stalin's purges may have ensured that Communists would never gain power in advanced capitalist (and increasingly democratic) societies. But the promise of decisively superior economic growth made the USSR a model for developing societies, and a focus of attraction everywhere.

The gross privileges of the elite and the shocking collapse of economic planning put paid to the bureaucratic-Stalinist model. Today, there is no hope even for a democratic socialist movement in the west that wishes to challenge the domination of the stock exchange and Washington, while the example of socialism in the east remains economically crippled and politically repressive.

Why? Because a desired socialism can only emerge in the west with majority support within an increasingly diverse and complex workforce. Such support is inconceivable if the example of socialism seems in every respect less preferable. And socialism is bound to seem less preferable in every respect unless there is democracy in the USSR, whether you think it to be socialist or not.

Comfort vs freedom

Many of us for whom socialism means democracy first and foremost would anyway hesitate to choose material wellbeing before political freedom. Indeed, we would regard such a preference as placing profit before principles. Fortunately, such moralising is redundant. It seems clear that even if the west collapses into slump, fundamental human rights and freedoms are essential for contemporary economic development. An economy whose commanding resources are commonly owned may still work better, more equitably, less destructively, than one where major assets are controlled by the stock market. But for such a socialist economy to be able even to equal the potential of modern capitalism, with its tremendous power for innovation, let alone surpass it, it will need more democracy than we have today in the west, not less.

Gorbachev and his colleagues are attempting to administer a massive prescription of social, political and economic medicines, to make their socialism fit and attractive. In a word, *their* word, "democratic". The crux is not *glasnost*, and frankness in the media, but the beginning of a rule from below, without which the accolade of socialism is hardly more than a jest. If the reformers fail, the Soviet bloc may enter a catastrophic crisis during the 1990s. If they succeed, they will carry through not just a policy, such as more housebuilding, or even the introduction of market relations in agriculture, but a transformation of the regime. And not just any regime. We are talking about the end of Russian absolutism.

In more superficial days gone by, socialists would have said, "This is history in the making", and they'd have felt proud to be alive. . . These days, they shake their heads in doubt, or grumble that you don't speak Russian. So far as I am concerned this was the first in a string of criticisms levelled at me by Cathy Porter, in her review of *Soviet Freedom* in these columns (15 April). But I *can* speak of socialism. And so now can the Russians.

But are the Soviet reformers really concerned with democracy and freedom? For a start, to make the question specific, do they want to make the rights already specified in their constitution a reality? Institutional censorship has been lifted from the theatre, but the average Soviet is still a long way from freedom. Even their most eminent Marxist historian, Roy Medvedev, for example, has yet to see his books published, despite a recent call for this to happen.

My gut feeling is pessimistic, though I want to see the old order fought to the end. So I find it

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Camera Press

"Do not wait for instructions from above. It is necessary to act, Comrades"

> *"My gut feeling is pessimistic, though I want to see the old order fought to the end. But I think there is some reason to hope. The key reason the reformers want democracy is not altruistic. Unless there is some freedom the USSR will remain a basket case; there can't be effective modernisation without democracy"*

strange that others have criticised me for being too hopeful. What this seems to come down to is that I think there is *some* reason to hope: I reject the idea that there is no chance whatsoever of the Communist Party democratising itself and the society it commands. Some who advise Gorbachev, like Fedor Burlatsky, already argue that democracy will mean an autonomous civil society. But the key reason the reformers want democracy is not altruistic. They say that unless there is some freedom the USSR will remain a basket case; that there can't be effective modernisation without democracy. And they are right.

Dramatic arguments on democracy are now taking place at the highest levels of the Party. On 17 April there was a national television discussion between Burlatsky and others. It got round to popular support for Stalin in Russia today. One participant said: "People say that in Stalin's time there was law and order. You will forgive me for what is perhaps a very bold thing to say: yes, there was order — in the cemeteries. We can do without that sort of order." Another contributor argued, "You won't find it easy to deal with bureaucracy through fine words, *glasnost,* discussion, critical condemnation. The economic roots of bureaucracy have always been rooted in the command style of management, in excessive centralisation. . .".

The programme — and I select it because, although the newspapers in the USSR now sell in unprecedented numbers, television is crucial mass media — was concerned primarily with an article that appeared in *Sovetskaya Rossiya* on 13 March. This was an outrageous text, composed in the style of a spontaneous reader's letter. It was full of anti-semitic and slavophile asides. It attacked those who demanded "power-sharing", a "parliamentary system", "free trade unions" and "autonomous publishing houses". In particular, while it condemned the mass repression of his time, it defended Stalin, and predicted that flowers will be put on his grave, just as they are still laid on the tomb of Peter the Great.

Echo of prison days

Now, many Soviets have a sincere love of Stalin, but imagine a long letter in a major German paper, saying that while concentrations camps were wrong, Hitler built the autobahns and ought to be compared to Frederick the Great and that those who attack Hitler's role are misleading young people by demanding pluralism and are anyway mostly "cosmopolitans". . . And then imagine that the paper then carries no reply or debate. Then you can sense what is at stake in Moscow in 1988;

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the fears that are aroused, and the risks that those who openly espouse reform must take. There should be no mistake. Those who chat freely about reform in a television studio in Moscow can hear the sound of prison doors, and are unsure if they echo from the past or the future.

It took three weeks before *Pravda* blasted back with a dramatic assault on the piece in *Sovetskaya Rossiya*. Its editorial singled out the defence of Stalin. "Stalin's guilt," *Pravda* insisted, "before the Party and the people for the mass repressions and lawlessness he permitted is enormous and unforgivable." "In defending Stalin," it went on, "people thereby defend the retention in our life and practice today of the methods engendered by him for 'resolving' disputed issues, and the social and state structures and norms of party and social life that he created." The editorial then argued that "Democracy is impossible without freedom of thought and speech, without an open and broad clash of opinions, and without keeping a critical eye on your life."

It also emphasised that administrative methods "are totally obsolete. It is time that anybody who is still placing hopes in these methods or in their modification understands that all this has already been tried, tried repeatedly indeed, and has failed to produce the desired results." The defence of Stalin, the editorial argued, is dominated by a fatalistic perception of history: "the attitude that you cannot make an omelette without breaking eggs" is "incompatible with socialist morality".

This argument signals a conflict which may prove decisive in the run-up to the special Party conference scheduled for June. The conference, the first to be held since Stalin's time, is an exceptional gathering, considerably larger and apparently more powerful than the regular Party Congresses. Already, the Soviet press carries letters demanding age limits for Politbureau members, or "strict limits on terms of office in Party posts".

I'll tell you this

In parallel with the debate between *Pravda* and *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, Gorbachev addressed party activists in Tashkent. He was there for the occasion of the formal decision to withdraw Soviet forces from Afghanistan. It is difficult to work out whether his tone signals a new confidence, or an ominous sense of desperation:

> Through *glasnost*, democracy, cost-accounting, the contract system, and the councils of brigades and workers' collectives, people are beginning to join the common effort.
>
> This is not to everyone's liking. There remains a nostalgia for the past — for commanding. There are a great many people who view their particular factory, village, collective farm, district or city as their own fiefdom. . .
>
> I'll tell you this. . . Without bringing out the potential of socialist democracy, comrades, we shall not be able to unfold the potential of socialism either, we shall not be able to make our *perestroika* irreversible. . .
>
> Why am I laying emphasis on this point? It is the principal one, comrades. And taking into account the audience in this hall, this subject is all the more appropriate to be discussed in straightforward, honest party language. Disapproving voices can be heard, saying: 'This is what your democracy has led to', 'This is what your *perestroika* has brought you'.

And at the end of his speech, Gorbachev said: "Do not wait for instructions from above . . . It is necessary to act, comrades."

But what kind of comrades are they, who need to be told this? The Soviet expert Martin McCauley has emphasised how Gorbachev "wants a stronger role for the party elite at the centre, but lower down he wants far less party and administrative interference in society and the economy." The result may well be massive resistance from many a petty fiefdom.

Will Gorby make it?

We must ask whether this epoch-making effort to democratise the USSR will succeed. But where is it coming from, and why is it taking place? Here, the experts, no matter how many of the Soviet Union's languages they can read, may not be reliable. Of course, they knew reform was needed. But if, four years ago, you had predicted the political and economic emphasis on democracy that is now Kremlin policy, I doubt if a single western specialist would have done more than laugh at the idea.

Today, we can take seriously the possibility that a democratic programme will be implemented by the Party.

> *"In more superficial days gone by, socialists would have said: "This is history in the making," and they'd have felt proud to be alive. These days, they shake their heads in doubt, or grumble that you don't speak Russian"*

Neal Ascherson suggests that nonetheless when political reform has swept away the gross levels of corruption and incompetence, a renewed, efficient version of Stalinism could be re-installed. Like the state machine in East Germany, this could be termed KGB socialism. The *Sovetskaya Rossiya* letter makes it clear that there are influential forces that want such an outcome in the USSR.

Others rule out completely the possibility of political democracy emerging from a process overseen by a Communist party. A Czech friend of mine, aware from his own experience that a Soviet-style Party can generate a democratic movement, regards the Russian national tradition as totally incapable of absorbing democratic norms. I feel uneasy in the face of such predictions. I have a different sense of the tragedy of Soviet socialism. In classic tragedy the hero proceeds to attempt the impossible and meets his inevitable destruction. Such a vision when applied to the USSR sees failure as the *only* possible outcome of *perestroika*. Economic reform, perhaps; political transformation, never.

My own view is that, despite everything, the Party has generated a group of leaders who, influenced by their knowledge of the west and determined to compete with it, really mean to democratise their country if they can.

A tragedy is possible not because their reforms are inevitably doomed, but because they might succeed. A modern tragedy is on the cards: one that is laced with hope. For if the reformers are defeated it will be tragic because such an outcome is *not* inevitable.

The irony is that the main reason for hope is the bleak economic disaster of the present. There can be no going back, and only the democratic reformers have a coherent programme of how to go forward from the debacle of the Brezhnev era.

This is also why the situation is fraught with danger. The image of the USSR as a monstrously conservative society is misleading. It is a revolutionary one. Moscow will not revert into the hands of bemused gerontocrats if Gorbachev is ousted or assassinated. As the "letter" in *Sovetskaya Rossiya* makes clear, the alternative is an anti-democratic programme of *perestroika* that will be frighteningly rigorous.

How should we talk, think, argue and write about what is happening in Moscow, now that it will effect all our lives? Cathy Porter regards it as presumptious of me to have flown to the Soviet Union or to quote from *Moscow News*. Such a put-down can only close off discussion. Whereas in *Soviet Freedom* I sought to quote as many voices as possible from within the Soviet experience: from pessimists to strikers, from senior officials to teenagers, from an old Bolshevik to a young rocker. And thereby describe the novel political space that has opened up at the moment in Russia.

In the 1970s, I visited eastern Europe, and edited Miklos Haraszti's *A Worker in a Worker's State*. This experience showed me how socialist ideas were being driven out of the countries of eastern Europe, in the aftermath of the suppression of the Prague Spring. My main interest, however, concerned Vietnam. And this research took me to Cambodia in 1980, where I investigated and systematically photographed the centre of Pol Pot's bureaucracy of death in Phnom Penh, bringing back documents to be analysed by Chanthou Boua and Ben Kiernan in an eight page supplement to the *New Statesman* (2 May 1980). I got as close — physically and emotionally close, that is — to the pitiless reality of Stalinism, as the average western expert of the Soviet experience. But for this I had to thank those who had liberated the Khmer people from Pol Pot: the Vietnamese Communists. . .

We live in dark but interesting times. Nuclear science promises our total annihilation, and the odds must be on a major war occurring in the lifetime of our children, between now and 2050. The ecosphere is terribly wounded already. From Brazil, to the West Bank, to Tibet, nations suffer catastrophic intrusions. The mad and bad are out and about in Washington, Moscow, Peking, London and Tokyo.

But there is also a sense of endings: to US domination, to Stalinism, to bureaucratic labourism, to militarism, to the old apologetics. Which means that we do not live in a world that is going to stay the same. I'm glad of that, because I want it to be different. As for the kind of change we must expect. . . to my astonishment the new policies in Moscow are most welcome. Let's not be churlish therefore; at least not until the Party conference in June. The more we know, and argue, about developments in the USSR, the better we will be prepared for the worse, or even the better. □

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MOSCOW

Diary of Russian enlightenment

SALLY LAIRD *visited Moscow with a delegation from the International Helsinki Federation, and was struck by the enormity of the task facing reformers*

HABITS OF MISTRUST are hard to outgrow. Years of empty rhetoric and lying have led to a distortion of the meaning of ordinary words, the grotesque effects of which are still painfully evident. If sometimes I felt sceptical about the value of our talks over tea in the ministries and state institutions, it was because of all those people who are not yet welcome to tea. And yet, the most remarkable thing about the people left "outside" — discussing human rights in pokey flats in the suburbs — is that they are not entirely sceptical themselves. They know that some of the people in the ministries are doing good and are worth supporting, and would gladly accept an invitation to tea if it were offered.

24 January: Press club

Late in the evening, three representatives of the unofficial "Press Club Glasnost" came to see us. They were Lev Timofeev, Larisa Bogoraz and Sergei Kovalyov — all hallowed names of the old human rights movements. In my unrestructured mind, they still belonged on pictures of camps, prisons, funerals, Siberia; I had trouble adjusting to their presence in the bar of the Hotel Belgrade. But times and the movement have changed. How much they've changed is what we've come to find out. The Press Club, an independent political and human rights association, was founded last year by a group of ex-political prisoners, and is a member of the International Helsinki Federation.

As the official interpreter keeps saying, "We really have our hands full over here." The interpreter is a smooth fellow in a milk-chocolate suit. For some reason, this phrase about the hands full seems to give him a special satisfaction. "Yes," he seems to be saying, "everything so far has been perfectly ghastly, why not admit it? Because from now on everything will be much better." This is the new complacency of *glasnost*, and it can get on your nerves.

26 January: Do they exist?

In the morning we had our first full meeting with our official hosts, the Soviet Committee for European Security and Cooperation. It seemed an appropriate occasion to mention our Soviet members, and to enquire if some of them might come to the meeting tomorrow.

Our hosts' reaction to this was somewhat baffling. They had never heard of the Press Club Glasnost. For this reason, moreover, they seemed to doubt that it existed. They said they would find out, by tomorrow, if it existed or not.

A club *exists*, they clarified, to the extent that it is *registered*. I wondered if we hadn't inadvertently slipped into a queer form of Berkleyan idealism, such as famously endangers the existence of things. But the meeting with Burlatksy's Commission would be open, they said. (The non-governmental commission on human rights chaired by Fyodor Burlatsky, a leading journalist and anti-Stalinist.) So anyone was welcome to come along and listen. Did one have to exist in order to come?

27 January: Dignity, *skandal*

It was a most extraordinary meeting. There must have been some 70 people in the hall of the Peace Fund on Kropotkin Street. Behind us, on the public chairs, sat a group of Hare Krishna devotees. They had been demonstrating outside the building when we arrived; the police had intervened to protect the demonstrators, and now they were sitting peacefully indoors. Next to them were some twenty or thirty members of the Jewish emigration movement. Press and TV crews with lighting umbrellas were ranged behind. Seated at the table with the delegation and the Burlatsky Commission were Sergei Kovalyov, Larisa Bogaraz and Lev Timofeev.

After some debate, they'd been allowed on the bus. With some difficulty, they'd got seats at the table. For two hours, they'd sat in silence while we talked. We'd talked about the need for cooperation rather than confrontation, and about the difficulties of monitoring human rights in one's own country rather than abroad. We'd talked about the law reforms; about emigration; about political prisoners. One member of the Commission, a Mr Krutogolov, had admitted that political prisoners existed. He referred to himself as an "official dissident".

And now someone asked if Lev Timofeev, an ex-political prisoner, could speak. Fyodor Burlatsky turned to the leader of our delegation and said: "Mr Schwarzenberg, do you wish to cooperate with us or do you intend to create a *skandal*?" I do not think Burlatsky is a bad man. I think he is quite a brave man. I think we had put him in a nearly impossible position. In the circumstances, it was not surprising that he invoked the nightmare of *skandal*. It's a peculiarly Russian nightmare. *Skandal* in Russian means catastrophe. It describes the moment when a herd of swine come rushing, à la Gogol, into the courtroom; it's the collapse of ceremony, the point at which devils break loose. It means a long-postponed meeting with truth.

Without exaggeration, it seems to me that the future of human rights in this country depends on whether this nightmare is overcome.

The leader of our delegation requested that Lev Timofeev be given the floor. The Commission conferred; they said yes, and then no. Finally Professor Burlatsky took courage. "I will give the floor," he said, " to Timofeev. I don't suppose it will be a national calamity. The skies won't fall, the birds will continue to fly, and the fish will go on swimming in the river. OK, then, Timofeev, speak!"

"I notice," Lev Timofeev began, "that Professor Burlatsky found it difficult to know how to address me — whether to call me Comrade, as is the custom here, or Mister, as is the custom in the West. So he decided just to call me Timofeev . . . Well, I'm used to that. For two years I was in a labour camp and that is what they called me there.

"Nevertheless, I and my colleagues have come here with friendly feelings — not to quarrel with you, but to cooperate . . .

"I will not go into the problems that we discuss in our Press Club. But whenever we meet, what really concerns us is the fate of our friends who remain in the camps. Their guilt is not more than, five years ago, would have been the guilt of the esteemed professors sitting here, had they said then what they've been saying today.

"Today, our most important task is to recapture the meaning of certain well-known words, words such as *freedom*, *right* and *love*. Without common ground in our understanding of these words, which express traditional human values, it will be impossible to achieve disarmament, cooperation, or peace. Peace not just in the world, but in our souls . . ."

The interpreter delivered this speech in ringing tones. When he came to "Freedom, right and love" he paused for a moment in frank astonishment, then shot the words, for all they were worth, into the profound silence of the room.

29 January: Social initiatives

Today five of us went to a meeting with the Club of Social Initiatives. Its aim was to draw together a host of new political and social clubs — "Children of *glasnost*", as they call themselves. At least half a dozen different "initiatives" were represented at the meeting today, and as the participants argued, shouted, shut each other up, it became clear that there were as many views in the room as there were voices to express them. Far from being embarrassed by this disharmony, the Club's members seemed to regard it as their principal virtue. What cheered me about this chaotic occasion was that it bore no resemblance whatsoever to a Party meeting.

It's not accidental that the "Children of *glasnost*" have chosen, as names for their initiatives, not only the catchwords of the 1980s — *perestroika, glasnost* — but titles, such as "Civil Dignity", that have about them an 18th century air. I think they see themselves as participants in a new Russian Enlightenment, and their claim is not altogether absurd.

What they, and the Press Club Glasnost, and others like them are seeking is precisely a space, within the state, for civil society to operate once again. They are asserting its right to exist; to offer alongside the state an alternative route to dignity. "Space", too, can be interpreted quite literally. The inhabitants of those endless Moscow suburbs are beginning to outgrow their private apartments and lay claim, in their wintry city, to their share of public shelter.

"Why did we decide to register our club, despite the compromises that it involves? For a very practical reason," one of its members explained. "We want the right to rent a roof over our heads. In temperatures like these, how can you hold a mass meeting in the street? It would last five minutes." □

Sally Laird is a researcher for "Index on Censorship", the April issue of which contains a full account of her visit to Moscow. May's "Index" is a special 100th issue, available from 39c Highbury Place, London N5 1QP.

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A socialism to warm the heart

Denmark goes to the polls on Tuesday over the issue of banning nuclear-armed ships from its harbours, which was pressed by the far-left Socialist People's Party — a party close to

HILARY WAINWRIGHT*'s heart*

ONE OF MY political dreams is to be able to join and campaign for a party about which I feel really enthusiastic. I am afraid that the prospect of joining a party in order to change it — the prospect on offer with Labour Party membership for a left-wing socialist — has never set my soul on fire.

One of the attractions of proportional representation, in addition to the democratic argument, is that it might enable a radical left-wing party to gain political representation and accumulate popular support. But would an electorally separate party actually increase the possibilities of socialist change? Surely its only chances of directly influencing government would be by bargaining with whatever was the pragmatic party of labour; is not the left in a stronger position if it is already part of that party, with the added attraction — at least in theory — of possible leadership? I went to Denmark to find out.

There, under a proportional electoral system, the Socialist People's Party (the SF), a party committed to a "democratically based socialist revolution", has 15 per cent of the vote, 27 out of 179 MPs and has a significant hold on local government in Copenhagen and several other cities. Last year, the largest trades union, the union of unskilled workers, voted at its congress against the leadership's recommendation to give funds to the SF as well as to the Social Democrats. This union has also been one of the main pressures on the Social Democrats to fight the coming general election on a programme of a "workers' government" jointly with the Socialist People's Party.

A survey of the SF's political composition reveals, like a geology diagram, the accumulated layers in all their varied colours, of the old new left from 1956 (it was they who founded the party after a split in the Communist Party over Hungary and Yugoslavia in 1958), of the new new left, deposited unevenly from 1968 onwards after several volcanic eruptions, the socialist minded participants in the green and feminist movements of the 1970s and more recently those politically conscious trade unionists frustrated by the conservatism of social democracy.

Since 1979 the party has trebled its vote to provide the Social Democrats with serious electoral competition from the left. The Social Democrats' vote has dropped from its 1960 peak of 42 per cent to 29 per cent. The Social Democrats have lost a smaller proportion of their votes to the right, to an anti-tax party and to a small populist, anti-immigration party led by seafarers. The present Conservative-Liberal coalition has been in government since 1982. As in West Germany where the Greens have posed a similar, though weaker, threat to the Social Democrats (SPD), the competition has pushed the Social Democrats to the left, leading them to oppose nuclear power and strengthen their opposition to nuclear weapons on Danish land or in Danish ports. It was a united initiative on this latter issue which led to the defeat of Poul Schlüter's minority government. NATO's general secretary declared that such a stance was contrary to NATO policy, and Schlüter called an election on the issue of loyalty to the Atlantic Alliance. (You wouldn't believe the issue was of such international importance from the *Guardian*'s description this week of the SF as "Militant-type entrists".)

'Socialist transformation'

The Danish SF, however, unlike the German Greens, aims for "socialist transformation". An objective about which I found them refreshingly open and self-confident. "We do not hide that we are a revolutionary party," says Gert Petersen, the party's General Secretary and one of the few MPs who is a veteran from the original conflicts in Communist Party. The meaning here of "revolutionary" is shaped by both the party's origins in the communist tradition and by its break from the Soviet-dominated Communist International. Its economic vision is of collective — including co-operative — ownership of the means of production and a planned economy which is decentralised and self-administered.

> *"The meaning here of revolutionary is shaped by the party's origins in, and break with, the Soviet Communist tradition. Its economic vision is of collective — including co-operative — ownership of the means of production and a planned economy which is self-administered"*

Its strategy has four planks, some immediate and some gradual. First, it would nationalise all the banks and insurance companies and use these, plus a central fund, to influence investment throughout the economy. (It would also bring the energy sector — coal, oil, electricity and wind power — into public ownership immediately). Second, it would lift the prohibition on the large public pension funds exerting influence on company investment decisions. Third, it would require private companies to put 3 per cent of their annual profit into a workers' collective fund which would gradually increase its share of the company's capital. Fourth, it would give workers' councils a power of veto over hiring and firing, the introduction of new technology and over health and safety.

Politically, it stresses the importance of regional devolution, a constitution and an independent, elected judiciary, which guarantees democratic rights.

The other point behind its description of revolution as "democratically based" is a recognition that true socialism can come about only if it is backed by the overwhelming majority of people. And this means an electoral majority. Such a parliamentary majority is a *necessary* but not a *sufficient* condition for revolution — "we know for sure," its programme states, "that the privileged groups of capitalist society will not relinquish power without resistance. A democratic way must necessarily be a way of class struggle." And if the majority of people changes its mind during the transition period, then "the socialist forces will have to accept this change of mind. Their answer must be an increased effort to regain the majority."

This explicit vision of transformation, confidently expressed on TV (on which in Denmark all parties have equal time regardless of electoral strength) distinguishes the SF radically from the Social Democrats. In 1961, the Danish Social Democrats, like the German SPD at Bad Godesberg, abandoned the goal of social ownership and committed themselves to the mixed economy. In particular, the Social Democrats disagree with the SF's commitment to nationalise the financial institutions.

Short-term aims

The SF's long-term aim is only one part of their programme. "If we just said that we are for socialism we would be easily isolated," comments Lilli Gyldenkilde, an ex manual worker, now one of the party's eleven women MPs. Immediate reforms that will "enhance security and create opportunities for *joie de vivre*" are a key to the party's popular base, both electorally and increasingly in the unions. Such reforms stress gaining workers' control over the design and introduction of technology and extending the powers of municipal government against pollution and poor quality products.

An illustration of the combination of immediate demands and long-term aims is in international relations: the SF's long-term aim is withdrawal from NATO; in any negotiations with the Social Democrats, however, its condition for supporting a Social Democrat government would be Denmark's withdrawal from NATO's nuclear plann-

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ing group, and an ending of Denmark's agreement to host NATO's nuclear weapons at a time of crisis or war. The Social Democrats will find it difficult to accept this.

Both long-term goals and short-term aims show the deep influence of new social movements on the ideas of the SF. This influence has not been a matter of coupling the agendas of these movements on to the party's programme like further carriages on an endless train of demands — a technique that is common on the British left. Rather, the SF members in these movements have led the way in rethinking many of the official Communist notions which the SF took with it when it split; it has replaced the orthodox commitment to growth, for instance, with a strategy for selective growth; running down or converting environmentally damaging, and expanding socially useful, parts of the economy. The SF combines a stress on defence of workers' living standards with a new emphasis, influenced by feminism, on "human relations" and the qualitative improvement of working life. "The demand for a shorter day of labour is perhaps our most important domestic reform," says Charlada Armandsen, a leading SF councillor in Copenhagen. Unlike some of the Eurocommunist parties with which they are sometimes compared, they have retained what Gert Petersen calls "a commitment to the traditional themes of class struggle" at the same time as opening up to the ideas of social movements.

The Party has managed to contain the tensions between class politics and social movements; between long-term and immediate aims; and between parliament and extra-parliamentary action.

Open government

One reason why different views of revolutionary change can co-exist in one party lies in the relatively democratic and open nature of this party. In reaction to the centralism of the Communist Party and the monopolistic claims of both Stalinism and, in a different way, the Social Democrats, the SF has a pluralistic political culture. "It is a socialist party that allows us to say what we want," concluded Kaj Ibsen, chairman of the Kolding branch of the manual workers' union. A further factor which struck me forcefully was the absence of a permanent power struggle between fundamentally different views — the kind of conflict which underlies debate, if you can call it that, in the Labour Party. The agenda is set by the party's long-term aims and the problems of applying them in changing circumstances, not by the need to defend these long-term aims from an internal opponent.

A fair electoral system and the possibility of independent political representation for socialists to the left of social democracy is not, unfortunately, on the horizon in Britain. Nevertheless the left in Britain, inside and outside the Labour Party, would benefit tremendously from a greater measure of independence, intellectually, culturally and in its public appeal. That would be an effort against the grain of Labour Party and trade union institutions. But the needs of people now taking action against the government, and initiatives like the Socialist Conference, involving the left inside and outside the Labour Party, could be a powerful catalyst. Perhaps, then, I won't need to emigrate to Denmark to fulfil my dream! □

Hilary Wainwright is an Associate Fellow of the Transnational Institute, Amsterdam, and is working on a book about the radical left in Europe.

DUKAKOI

The man most likely to

ELGY GILLESPIE *looks down on the Duke*

Pennsylvania

CAN A SHORT PERSON become President of the United States? And will there be a Passover in the White House next year? "It's looking good. Provided it doesn't go to my head," said Mike Dukakis last week, with the wariness of someone who never quite believed his own luck, but might soon have to believe his presidentiability.

"But I dunno. How does it look to you?" he added, with a flip shrug and comic timing that his Oscar-winning cousin Olympia Dukakis of *Moonstruck* must have taught him. Just two months ago in New Hampshire (it must seem a millennium to him) he looked like a short person who never made jokes, who was followed round by a kazoo band playing the *Monty Python* theme (sic) for needed atmosphere. It was in New Hampshire that I tumbled to the real reason the Democrat runners were formerly dubbed "The Seven Dwarfs". He barely reached my knee.

This week the Duke is downplaying his inevitable victory in securing the Democratic Party nomination (let alone the real possibility that he might beat George Bush in the presidential election in November), and refusing to rise to Jesse Jackson's increasingly personal attacks on him. Meanwhile his followers are arguing endlessly over who should be his Vice President. Senator Sam Nunn of Georgia, to bring in the South? No; he doesn't want it unless he can have the National Security Council too, and he's not allowed to do two jobs. John Glenn, astronaut, of Ohio? Over a hundred delegates and all the *Reader's Digest* readers come with him, but would it carry California? No. But the Duke will find it impossible to ask Jackson to "Veep" (VP, Vice President) now. (Overtaxed and overtired, Jesse refuses to concede and explodes in private whenever the word "Veep" comes up.)

Decent in everything

The Duke is riding high, but go to his head? Never. Looking at that prow-nosed craggy-browed face, the face you can see nursing an Ouzo in a thousand tavernas in Crete, it is instantly apparent that this is an honest and cautious family man who has always balanced his chequebook and has never swung from chandeliers. Pretty Kitty, his sparkling (and secretly smoking: "This cigarette is off the record, okay?") Jewish wife is known to be the fun half of the couple. Decent in everything, they are bringing up their three kids half Jewish and half Greek Orthodox.

Speaking of whom: what is the plural form for a Dukakis? Jim Peck Gray of the Dukakis campaign office in Boston says it is Dukakis' with a final apostrophe. Mrs Eleni Hitchens, herself a Hellene, says it is "Dukakides", while Dukakis jokes about it being "Dukakoi" or perhaps "Dukakii"; I go for Dukakises.

Like Republican nominee George Bush, the Duke is famous for his lack of charisma. Punters already dread "The Battle of the Bores", and pine for those distant "Seven Dwarfs" days of womanising and plagiarising and damn-your-eyesing.

Whereas fatally wounded Jesse Jackson is still the undisputed possessor of chutzpah, moxie and magic: loaded with charisma, indeed. Suddenly, though, in the wake of the Pennsylvania primary election last week, "Cool Hand Duke" acquired a personality implant, even, perhaps, an extra inch in height.

He jokes about being Greek in Greek. He quips in Spanish about being Greek. He jokes in Italian, too. "*Uno faccia, una razza*" (one face, one race), he told a bunch of Italian immigrant workers in a semi-deserted steel town called Greensburg, somehow convincing them they were really Greek too. But the candidate whose aides blew the whistle on Joe Biden for copying Neil Kinnock is no oratorical pioneer, either. His best stumping speech about the essential ethnicity of being American is shamelessly ripped off from his Italian neighbour next door in New York, Mario Cuomo. Like Cuomo, Dukakis is the son of immigrants — Euterpe and Panos of Brooklyn — and never lets people forget it.

One face, one race

One or two phrases are lifted more or less from Cuomo's speech about the Democrats' ethnic soul at the 1984 San Francisco convention. The "I want to bring our family together again" bit sounds like Jesse and his "rainbow peoples". Cuomo has given his permission — indeed it was his idea — but Jesse's aides say the Duke is stealing their boy's themes.

In the declining steel towns around Pittsburgh, there are plenty of Slavs and Italians, but few blacks, of course. The same goes for the next industrial state primaries: Ohio, Indiana. The locals who showed up to see Jackson last week when he took a riverboat past the old coaltips down the Allegheny River told me they had seen no presidential candidate in their neck of the woods since JFK, in 1960.

But they chorused "A lot more" when I asked how big JFK's crowd looked beside Jesse's in tiny Elizabeth, where there are just 17 black families. All 17 families turned up at the jetty, including a gang of starstruck small boys who threatened to throw each other in the water to claim Jesse's attention. Jesse retained his filmstar glow, despite a storm that blew up around him in the middle of his speech. But the charm was behind a cloud, and something — lack of money, knowing he had blown it, troubles of another kind, what could it be? — was plainly bothering him.

The crowd responded to Jackson's by now rather stock phrases about the reverse Robin Hoodism of Reagan's administration in a jolly, picnicking fashion. But it was clear that they were there for the beer. Jackson has begun to get at the Duke, pressing him hard on foreign policy (the Duke's weak point) and boasts of meeting heads of state when they were still alive, not when they were dead "like George Bush". (Bush's main job as VP is to go to state funerals; his motto: "You die, we fly".) Dukakis has been nothing but respectful about his rival, permitting himself only the magnanimity of the victor, and the rare oblique undercut: "I'm a doer not a talker." □

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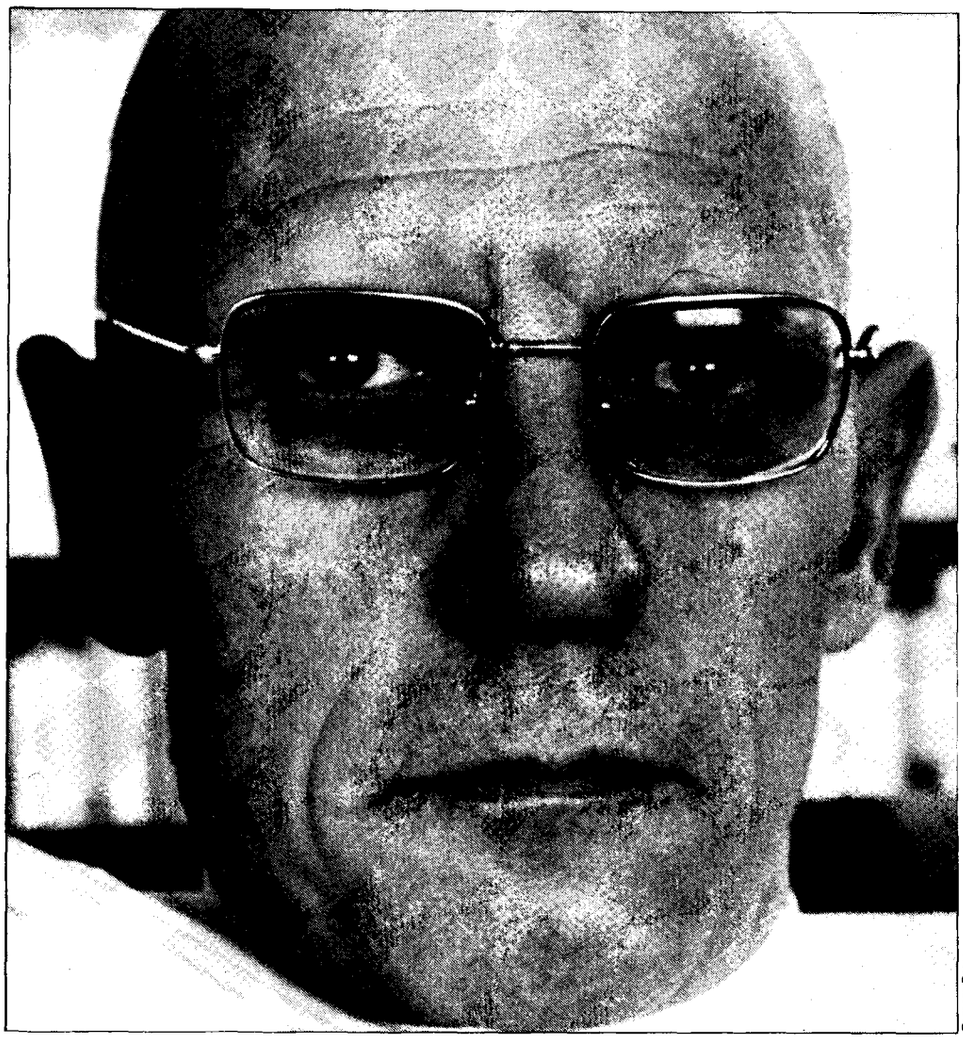
Books



Camera Press

Live like a human

COLIN GORDON *celebrates the publication of volume three of* **MICHEL FOUCAULT**'*s "The History of Sexuality" and considers the philosopher's contribution to political thought*

MICHEL FOUCAULT's *History of Sexuality* has a complex history. Its first volume appeared in 1976 and formed a kind of preface and prospectus for what was to be a set of five further books, covering the genesis of the modern concept of sexuality in mediaeval and modern Europe. Some years afterwards Foucault dropped this scheme, jettisoning at least one completed volume in manuscript, and set out instead to write three quite different books whose historical focus would be shifted back to deal with ideas concerning individual sexual conduct in the cultures of classical Antiquity and the early Christian Church.

Foucault died in 1984, aged 57, only weeks after the French publication of the first two of these books, *The Use of Pleasure* and *The Care of the Self,** which deal respectively with notions about sexual conduct in ancient Greece and Rome. The last volume, *The Body and the Flesh,* covering the early Christian epoch, was announced as forthcoming by Foucault's publishers in 1984. It exists in the form of what is said to be a nearly complete unpublished manuscript. Whether Foucault's literary executors will in due course allow this to be published is as yet unclear.

The two books Foucault spent his last year completing are, to be sure, complete and satisfying enough in themselves. The Preface to *The Use of Pleasure,* where Foucault explains his project and its modifications, its relation to the objects of his life's work and the conception of philosophy which this embodies, deserves to be counted as one of the most powerful testamentary statements by a modern thinker, and as one of the literary summits of 20th-century philosophy.

Foucault's 1976 book looked at the ways in which, from the mediaeval confessional onwards, Western culture induces individuals to talk interminably about their sexual desires, at why sexuality becomes in modern times an affair of state, and at some reasons why the pursuit of sexual self-knowledge is not a road to freedom. In the light of Foucault's ideas on the interconnection of power and knowledge, the following volumes were going to look at ways different techniques for normalising individuals have shaped our notions of sexual identity. Probably the parts of this programme which caused most controversy among Foucault's left audience (both Anglo-Saxon humanists and Lacan-oriented theorists) and exposed him to frequent wild accusations of immoralism or nihilism were its debunking attitude to the question of subjectivity, and its avowed interest in replacing a theory of desire with an ethics of pleasure.

It seems that these issues motivated the later foray into Antiquity. The later Foucault disavows any wish to reduce questions about subjects to questions about power. His last books offer, alongside his earlier studies of relations of knowledges and types of power relating to individuals, a study of relations of individual self to self, of a pagan "culture of the self". They do not, as has sometimes been supposed, mark Foucault's late conversion to the cause of a "theory of the subject". For Foucault, the "subject" never means a basic knowable substratum of our being, but only a mode of existence shaped and formed by particular practices; ancient ethics illustrates this point because it is not centred on a science of the soul or psyche, but on an art or technique of living; and ancient sexual ethics is largely concerned with an art of everyday living which maintains the individual in a posture of autonomy. Reconstructing the ways in which early Christianity inherits various parts of this culture is the later Foucault's research strategy for explaining the genealogy of the Western "man of desire".

In some later interviews Foucault makes clear his lack of nostalgia for the specific (and conspicuously phallocratic) content of these Greek and Roman doctrines of sexual conduct. What he does seem to appreciate, or at least to commend as an option worthy of consideration, is the notion of a morality of personal conduct in the form of an "aesthetics of existence", the idea that inventing different styles or ways of living can be an intellectually and morally interesting pursuit.

People who themselves favour a militant style of existence are apt to interpret ideas like these as indicating Foucault's final lapse into an irresponsible, depoliticised aestheticism, a vice which some sections of the left are traditionally quick to suspect homosexuals of. As is well shown by Foucault's two essays in *Technologies of the Self**, however, the *History of Sexuality* is only one, albeit now the most accessible part of Foucault's later philosophy. And this philosophy, far from being an abandonment of political interests, could have a good deal to contribute to attempts at fresh

* *Michel Foucault, "The History of Sexuality Vol. 3: The Care of the Self" Trans. Robert Hurley (Allen Lane/Penguin, £17.95)*
Luther H. Martin et al, eds: "Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault" (Massachusetts, Hb, $22.50; Tavistock, Pb, £8.95)

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political thought within the English-speaking left.

Foucault's work on sexuality was accompanied by an ongoing programme of research into what he called governmental rationalities. The two fields intersected, through the modern domain of "biopolitics", where the biological elements of human life become objects of governmental policy, as also through the Greek stress on government of the self as a precondition and training for civic activity and the government of others. In his Paris lectures of 1979 Foucault argued that neoliberalism has owed its success to a modification of government's rationale allied to a new political conception of individuality as enterprise, while contemporary socialism's weakness lay in its lack of any distinctive rationality of government. In one of his last interviews he criticised the French Socialist Party for its failure while in power to establish a dialogue between government and governed which might allow this problem to be worked on.

In his later years Foucault was a leading French supporter of *Solidarnosc* and his activities brought him into contact with Edmond Maire and the CFDT trade union. This led to some published dialogues on the Welfare State, where Foucault poses as a current problem of social democracy the reform of welfare institutions to satisfy new social demands for increased individual autonomy at the same time as maintaining existing guarantees of individual security. Another project which Foucault initiated with his fellow campaigner against capital punishment, Robert Badinter, was an institute of legal research designed to explore new conceptions of the rule of law which could provide a framework of liberties for a pluralistic society.

The titles of these books remind one of the American bookshops which now display part of their stock under the heading of "Self-Improvement". Foucault liked America and spent much time teaching there, and some of his most illuminating later essays were efforts to explain himself more clearly to American colleagues or students. He would certainly have perceived that new and imponderable changes are occurring, in America and elsewhere, in the area of the "culture of the self". Perhaps his study of this theme in another epoch can help us to analyse what is happening to us now. □

Speaking to the barbarians

Stephen Howe

Games with Shadows
NEAL ASCHERSON *Radius* £18 & £7.95

NEAL ASCHERSON's publisher calls him the most unusual political essayist now writing in Britain. This is a dubious claim: one can certainly think of essayists and of newspaper columnists who are *odder* than Ascherson, or who fit more closely one standard, middle-class, English usage of "unusual" — as polite synonym for "mad". Paul Johnson and Peregrine Worsthorne, for example, often write very unusual columns indeed.

Ascherson usually doesn't. He is, in fact, invariably sensible. He is also scholarly, witty, cosmopolitan, radical, iconoclastic and sometimes emotionally compelling in a manner unmatched by anyone else writing in a "mainstream" London paper. A seemingly more hyperbolic claim might actually bear more truth: that Ascherson is the *best* British political columnist.

Ascherson himself would probably be unimpressed by being called the best in London, for he is enjoyably and justly rude about this city's role as an intellectual, cultural or political centre. It would mean more to number him among the best in Europe.

For the present, Ascherson's *Observer* columns — the finest of them, together with a few longer essays, collected in this volume — are among the very few serious attempts in the London press to surmount the barriers of our ignorance of Europe. To me, and I know to many others, Ascherson's column is the main, almost the only, reason for buying the *Observer*.

There is a strong unifying thread running through virtually every piece in this collection (not merely, as Ascherson too modestly claims, certain recurring obsessions). This is an argument about the mutations of nationalism in postwar Europe and the uses and abuses of nationalist sentiment by the wielders of state power.

It had long been evident to afficionados of Ascherson's *Observer* column that he was developing, week by week, this single theme, virtually writing a book by instalments, attacking the subject each time from slightly different angles. It is thus some cause for regret that in collecting the articles between hard covers he did not take the opportunity to rework them, drawing out the underlying unities, pulling together the varied reflections into a more systematic architecture. As it stands, there is a frustrating elusiveness about the book, a sense of a big idea — an idea of Europe — coyly peeping round the corners of the prose but never fully displaying itself.

It is possible, of course, that the idea is not yet fully formed in Ascherson's own mind. If so, then this book, for all its many delights, is premature. The more mundane but irritating consequence of not rewriting is that there is a fair amount of repetition here: several ideas, phrases, anecdotes turn up more than once. The book is thus something less than the sum of its parts — but the parts are very good indeed.

Ascherson pursues his theme in both British and continental European settings. In the pieces on central and eastern Europe, almost all concerned in some way with the clashes and contradictions of nationality, almost all shadowed by the gigantic ghosts of Hitler and Stalin, he finds unfamiliar perspectives on even the most heavily picked-over ground: the Berlin Wall, the Holocaust, Barbie and Mengele, the Prague Spring. In writing of England he seeks, as he says, to "inspect this strange country through the lens of more sophisticated nations — Poland and Scotland, in particular".

Ascherson's writing gains immeasurably from a triple distancing from the comfortable assumptions of Englishness and of English journalism. He started with one immense intellectual advantage in this regard, that of being a Scot. He has worked in and written on central and eastern Europe for many years. He has a striking but lightly-worn breadth of historical learning, an historian's imagination.

The view of British political culture thus formed is distinctly and rightly unflattering. England, he says, is a nation — a distinct nation, though also dominant member of a multinational state — which utterly fails to understand itself *as* a nation. This failure of self-understanding leaves a gap filled by muddled myths of national continuity which Ascherson thinks of as "Druidic". As we flounder ever deeper in this morass of self-serving, self-deceiving nonsense, our governing institutions decay, our horizons narrow, our liberties erode. Renewal can come only by draining the ideological swamp and replacing the rusty State machine that is mixed in it, a "war against the State", a Republican programme: as sketched in the most important essay of this collection, "Ancient Britons and the Republican Dream".

Ascherson is not hostile to nationalism as such: perhaps he should be more so. His sympathy for Polish, for Czech, in an odd way even for German and, obviously enough, for Scottish national aspirations is strong. He seems to be suggesting that there should be not less English nationalism, but a different, clearer-sighted one, based on a truer picture of the national past and a more democratic ethos in the present. The Left should rally the demands of a "people", not of a mythologised nation or of a class. This is the least developed of the major suggestions Ascherson raises, but it is not clear in this embryonic form how completely the populist antidote differs from the nationalist disease. □

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Gotcha Gatsha!

Suzanne Cronje

Gatsha Buthelezi: Chief with a double agenda
MZALA *Zed* £27.95 & £7.95

WHEN SOUTH AFRICAN PRESIDENT P. W. Botha recently offered to expand the non-existent political rights of his country's voiceless majority, the first question asked by many white liberals was: How will Gatsha Buthelezi react? Judging from this book, he will do nothing to risk his reputation as an opponent of apartheid. But Buthelezi's patrons and friends in the West, who admire him for his anti-apartheid stance, are unlikely to take much comfort from anything else that it says.

Its author, "Mzala", is a regular contributor to *Sechaba,* the monthly publication of the African National Congress (ANC), South Africa's principal liberation movement. He has access to the ANC archives in Lusaka and provides new material on the role of the bantustans in South African politics. Unlike some of the other bantustan chiefs, Buthelezi has refused to accept "independence" from Pretoria. This has given him an air of defiance but, opposed to apartheid though he is, he has become an integral part of the system. Mzala suggests that this explains the favourable image his Western friends like to project of him. This is how he appeared to the President of Boston University:

> In you, Buthelezi, the Zulus and all the people of southern Africa have found a leader. Too widely the choice in South Africa is seen to lie between the vile reality of apartheid and the delusive promises of Marxism-Leninism.

Gavin Relly, chairman of the South African mining giant Anglo-American, said much the same thing in a more restrained way:

> My perspective of Chief Buthelezi is that no one — the ANC included — has done more to halt the ideological thrust of apartheid than Buthelezi. Because he has rejected violence as an instrument to bring about national change he naturally stands in a better light for many than those who do not.

For people like Relly, Buthelezi represents a plausible alternative to the ANC, largely because of his past links with the movement. Mzala throws new light on this relationship. The book includes correspondence between Buthelezi and the imprisoned ANC leader, Nelson Mandela: letters to which Buthelezi likes to refer in public and which help to sustain his self-image as a national leader. The text quoted supports the ANC contention that Mandela's letters to the Zulu leader were purely personal.

But the importance attached by both sides to this exchange is intriguing and points to a more complex history. Mzala admits, however reluctantly, that Buthelezi did once support some of the campaigns of the ANC Youth League — this was 30 or more years ago — but he emphasises that there is "no known record or substantial evidence that the chief was ever a member of the ANC".

Perhaps the most significant part of Mzala's evidence concerns the little-known fact that Buthelezi's *Inkatha* party was formed with the assistance of the ANC which "believed Chief Buthelezi would use the legal opportunities provided by the bantustan programme to participate in the mass mobilisation of the oppressed people". This did not happen; as ANC President Oliver Tambo told the ANC National Executive in 1985, "Unfortunately we failed to mobilise our own people to take on the task of resurrecting *Inkatha* . . . It therefore fell on Chief Gatsha Buthelezi himself who then built *Inkatha* into a personal power base." The ANC failure in Zululand has proved to be expensive. By the end of the last year the war waged by *Inkatha* vigilantes against their more radical opponents in Natal had claimed hundreds of lives, and it is no secret that the vigilantes worked in collaboration with the South African police against anti-apartheid activists.

Mzala says that there is no evidence that Buthelezi has been personally involved in organizing the activities of the *Inkatha* "warriors". But he quotes a telling comment on the Natal violence, made by Buthelezi to the *Inkatha* central committee in December last year:

> I am now coming close to believing that the only reconciliation that there will ever be in this country is the reconciliation of the most powerful with those who pay homage to the most powerful. We are talking about life and death struggle. We are talking about all-or-nothing victories. We are talking about the final triumph of good over evil.

The "evil" Buthelezi referred to was not apartheid but the resistance to it put up by trade unions and bodies like the United Democratic Front. These organisations have since been banned while *Inkatha* continues unhindered — a fact which should give those of Buthelezi's supporters who believe him to be an effective opponent of apartheid cause for thought. □

Neville Brody is the talented and prolific designer of, among much else, *The Face* and *Arena* magazines and record sleeves for Stiff, Festish and Rough Trade. He is also the subject of an exhibition currently at the V&A's Twentieth Century Gallery, THE GRAPHIC LANGUAGE OF NEVILLE BRODY, and its accompanying paperback, published by Thames and Hudson at £14.95. The book presents a comprehensive survey of Brody's work from college fanzines of 1978 onward, together with a somewhat turgid introduction by Jon Wozencroft (complete with footnotes, for total academic respectability). There are also some random commentaries, whose authorship is not always clear, revealing a mild paranoia of Brodie's about being "ripped off"; curious, for his own style is more derivative than might be at first supposed, as a glance at some 1940s design work shows. Brodie's peculiar celebrity undoubtedly depends on the instantly recognisable qualities of his work. He plays with distorted letterforms, impressive amounts of white space, headlines articulated by the random emphasis of words and wilful fount changes, and chalk drawings in a sub-expressionist style. It all looks wonderful in the book's miniaturised spreads. Relieved of the necessity of considering the content of the articles, you can admire them as pure form. For, in so much that he does, Brody seem to come first — his typography tugging at your sleeve with an insistent "look at me". He even attempted to redesign CND's logo (see above), turning it into the sort of symbols found on washing machine instructions, ignoring the only correct response to the commission: No. In all the formal ingenuity, the real function of graphic design, the lucid presentation of the written word, slips away. (Tony Garrett)

Only when I smile

Leslie Dick

Tiny Lies
KATE PULLINGER *Cape* £9.95

IN SOME BOOKS the violence bruises: you feel a thud and, later, the dark colour remains to remind you of that impact. *Tiny Lies* has the delicacy of a slight cut, the tracery of a razor perhaps: the kind of wound you don't notice until you see the bright red. You smile at it, you can't help smiling; there's no pain, just a thin line to delineate distress.

That smile persists throughout this collection of stories, bittersweet; it's a smile of surprise and understanding as Pullinger's heroines (all her protagonists are female) get the point. Razor cuts are painless but vivid and these women counter grey cities, unemployment, homelessness, insecurity and trouble with men with absurdist humour, anxious imagination, bright miniskirts and brief bursts of tapdancing in the kitchen. Almost everybody in the stories is out of work — but that doesn't stop them deciding to devote themselves either to the pursuit of truth or to the pursuit of complete happiness, as in "The Fact-Finding Mission". (Inevitably, there are no facts to find, a fact that Dora chooses to ignore.)

In "Fingers in the Cookie Jar" young women living in a squat go on raids together, shoplifting mascara and sunglasses from Oxford Street department stores. This isn't about making long

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A long shot

John Levett

Lacking a dice my ingenious son
Has made a frail, six-sided paper one,
A lobotomized cube, its hunkered shape
Is sealed with twelve collars of sellotape
And decorated with twenty-one dots
Like orbital, lunar forget-me-nots.
He throws the dice for five, I roll a three
Astonished by its botched geometry,
Its bobbled spin, its solo hit and run
Through house dust turned galactic in the sun.
It lands askew, he gets down on his knees
To focus on the inked astronomies
And breathes in very slowly to address
This momentary perch of randomness;
Our carpet and our sofa that maroons
The hindered odds on six blue paper moons.

John Levett's second collection, "Skedaddle", was published by Peterloo Poets last year.

days of inactivity bearable, it's about pleasure, having fun.

Fun is risky, especially the pleasures of love. In "The First Mistake or How to Read Marx" our heroine falls for a guy who admits that, like her, he hasn't actually *read* Marx. Their love affair is punctuated by further collusions: they haven't read *The History of Sexuality Vol 1* by Michel Foucault either, nor the *Prison Notebooks* by Gramsci. Isabel discovers the pleasure of not having to be anything more than a lovely, sexy, mysteriously quiet Woman. She wakes up just in time.

There are a lot of frocks in these stories, and a tendency to obsess about food. In "The Self-Loathing Diet or How to Hate Yourself into Thin Air" Sophie discovers the existence of cellulite, and the punitive language of the beauty magazine coincides perfectly with a feminine self-image that is wildly out of control. After days of dieting and massage, she ends up standing alone at a party, "dark clouds in her eyes", grimly repeating: "I'm having a good time; I have great thighs".

Yet the best stories are not these brief feminist epistles, light-footed accounts of the pleasures and pitfalls of marginal urban life. The best are tales that subtly shift gears, moving towards fantasy, surrealism: tales where, in this everyday world of jobs and squats and young women taking buses to the British Museum, impossible things happen. Re-reading Max Beerbohm recently, it was a delight to find a middle way — neither portentous nor whimsical — for the impossible to happen. In Pullinger's stories dreams seem to intersect with reality, as an ancient Egyptian wall-painting is uncovered behind the panelling in a London squat, or a shirt bought at a jumble sale appears undeniably to have belonged to Franz Kafka. In writing that is both deft and transparent, Pullinger neatly sidesteps the emotional blurriness of whimsy or sentimentality. The result is that real violence (of war, abortion, mental hospitals) and the ordinary horror of everyday life (jobs, love affairs, food) are presented in a way that shifts them out of nightmare into deadpan humour, with a clear edge of irony to cut the wild absurdity.

My absolutely favourite story is "The Battersea Power Station", which is too good even to begin to describe: read it. *Tiny Lies* has been chosen as one of the 20 books selected for the Feminist Book Fortnight in June: a deserved success for this intelligent and funny book. □

Ivory tower, ebony basement

Harriett Gilbert

Tell It Me Again
JOHN FULLER *Chatto* £10.95

MARTIN AMIS once described the following cultural irony: while writers tend to be paid most of all for film scripts, then progressively less for stage plays, journalism, novels, book reviews, poetry, in terms of the *strenuousness* they require the forms should be listed precisely the other way round.

The same observation could be made about nursing and Harley Street consultancy, mining for and trading in tin, but that doesn't make Amis' insight into literary values less pertinent. There is, however, a twist. A person may excel at the most demanding form, be among the most clever, influential and versatile poets of his generation, yet still write a novel (medium-demanding) of eyeball-popping incompetence.

John Fuller's first novel, *Flying to Nowhere*, was actually better than that: self-consciously smart-assed in places, but generally intriguing and burnt by abrupt flares of magic. Consistently, too, it used words with satisfactory precision: "In the great heat the tall grasses stood feathery and still, until the striding sandalled feet parted and crushed them. The hems of the woollen robes caught the seed tips and dragged them. Stems bowed and sprang, sending out tiny clouds of grass fruit . . ."

In that way, *Tell It Me Again* isn't badly written either. In every other aspect, however, Fuller's second novel is as clumsy, embarrassing and tedious as a drunken adolescent. Concerning the obsession of a middle-class, middle-aged, white, male classical composer with a female, black jazz singer whom he first hears on a juke box, it reduces the tensions of *Flying to Nowhere* — sex *v* spirituality, flesh *v* soul — to the crudest of (literally) black-and-white oppositions.

In a key passage near the end of the novel, our besotted hero — who has found his singer, been mystified by her "reality" and lost her — receives from his ex-wife a letter. Over two-and-a-half long pages she berates him. "I know you like to see yourself as a super-efficient work-machine operating in your ivory tower . . . The ivory tower has a basement, you know, where real life has to go on in its mucky way . . . most of us have to slop about in dirt all our lives . . . Dirty money, dirty blood, dirty sex . . ." The yearning for someone to have cut this chapter by 97 per cent is only exceeded by the shock of understanding that *this* is the book's revelation.

On the way to it Fuller has dragged us through reams of structurally useless, not especially decorative dialogue (mostly at NY dinner parties) and, from time to time, thumped us on the head with such ponderous and questionable generalisations as "It is natural . . . for the things we most regret to present themselves as being, however irrationally, our fault".

There are clues, however, that he knows he's in a mess. Occasionally at first, then with growing panic, he struggles to distance himself altogether by describing his characters as clichés, as "representative symbols", the events of his novel as a "cartoon scenario", a film script, a soundtrack, something happening on stage. I could of course be wrong: these may be intended as further indications of his hero's failure to be "real". But I think that they point more certainly to a highly skilled craftsman frustrated by a form more intractable than he'd supposed; perhaps also to an artist who knows that he's fudged — with his real/unreal opposition — the harder and more specific question as to whether his facility has, all his life, deprived his creativity of oxygen. □

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CRIME

Axioms speak louder

Nick Kimberley

PAST AND present co-exist happily in the series of *Women Crime Writers* published by Pandora Press. Series editors Rosalind Coward and Linda Semple set out their aims in a foreword printed in each book: they want to "reprint the best of women crime writers who have disappeared from print and to introduce a new generation of crime writers". This "new generation", they go on to suggest, is specifically feminist. This leads them to add a sort of health warning about political *faux pas* in their reprints: "Some writers do make snobbish, even racist remarks."

Of course they do, but even our thoroughly modern political sophistication has not yet managed to erase such faults; ideologically correct fiction is still a utopian dream (or dystopian nightmare). In any case, novels like Charlotte Armstrong's **Mischief** and Celia Fremlin's **The Hours Before Dawn** (£3.95 each) may not foreground politics, but they display a subtlety of motivation which is adequate compensation.

Both novels first appeared in the '50s: Armstrong, an American, published hers in 1951, Fremlin (British) in 1958. They share a sense of megalopolitan menace; in *Mischief*, New York is "the strange city snarling"; while Fremlin makes the pleasantly anonymous outer reaches of London into an unsettling maze. This gives them modernity enough; what makes them absolutely contemporary is the way in which they both focus their anxiety through the structures and strictures of family life.

Armstrong opens her novel with an uncloying vision of a happy family, visiting New York so that hubby can make an important speech at a business dinner. But tonight the outside world must penetrate their cocoon: they have to find a babysitter. When all else fails, they turn to the lift attendant at their hotel: he knows just the person. Nell, the candidate, is oddly taciturn and vacant.

Armstrong builds a strongly cinematic tension as she deploys her characters around the city and through the hotel, bringing them together and pulling them apart with some cross-cutting of which Hitchcock would have been proud. One timid character feels that "the ruthless, predatory male was axiomatic", but Armstrong uses that feeling ironically. Her men are far too wrapped up in pride to be ruthless. Nor need we worry about her being snobbish or racist; she's alert to the nuances of wealth and colour, using them to engineer the confrontation between mother and babysitter.

In a new preface to *The Hours Before Dawn*, Celia Fremlin writes that the novel originated in her own experiences with a baby who cried through the night: "I found myself quite distracted by lack of sleep". The hallucinatory tension which accompanies lack of sleep permeates the book: the suffering mother is as unsure about whether she's dreaming as we are.

Here the main conflict is between mother and lodger. In the process of setting up their tussle, Fremlin says some sharp things about a husband so tied up with work that marriage and family are forgotten — as long as he gets clean shirts and hot meals. This is *Diary of a Mad Housewife* in *Dixon of Dock Green* territory: the fair on Hampstead Heath, the paddling pool at the local park have become sites of terror. Fremlin doesn't overdo this: while her sense of familial fragility is acute, Louise is quite able to smile at herself, her husband and her paranoia. This powerful but very British *roman noir* fully deserves its reprint.

Amongst the "new generation" for whom Pandora provides a forum is the Canadian Maureen Moore, whose **Fieldwork** (£3.95) is a first novel. As in many feminist thrillers, the investigator is an outsider, dragged into the milieu of the usual detective almost against her will. A student of Urban Anthropology, she's assigned as an observer to a homicide investigation. Is this "outsiderdom" an echo of the feminist writer's sense of not belonging to the crime fiction tradition? Perhaps, although Armstrong and Fremlin show that the tradition is not as exclusive as it's sometimes portrayed.

Marsha Lewis, 31 years old, is a single parent who lost her own parents when she was at school and now lives with her daughter and aunt. The life she has with them continually pulls her away from the murder investigation; a good detective's instinct for guilt pulls her back. A sensitive man like myself can't fail to notice that there is only one male character who isn't reprehensible, and he makes only the briefest appearance: are we being told something here? Moore eagerly sets out her position on police brutality, male narcissism, iniquitous notions of feminine beauty, but manages to keep her mystery story on the move. Is it mere defensiveness that makes me say I could have done without the political posturing?

Ruth Rendell's **The Veiled One** (Hutchinson, £10.95) also displays a good deal of surface political detail, but as a means to set up opposition between characters. In her fourteenth Inspector Wexford novel, Rendell still manages to flesh him out with some neatly placed detail: by the end of page one, we know he's happily married but distracted, out of date but concerned about what's happening to his town. His daughter has become a disruptively modern figure whose waywardness threatens Wexford in quite brutally direct ways. Meanwhile, his partner Burden still struggles with the illiberal tendencies which a second marriage is only beginning to modify. It's perhaps a measure of her dissatisfaction with her detective that Rendell has Wexford out of the way for much of the time, as if to say that he's not the focal point, even if he does solve the puzzle. Despite a plethora of unnecessary literary allusion, Rendell once again shows that her real concern is the dangerous life which goes on behind the veil of the everyday. It's crime fiction's greatest strength that it insists on pulling that veil aside. □

Dangers of a changing wind

Diane Elson

The Challenge: Economics of Perestroika
ABEL AGANBEGYAN trans. PAULINE M. TIFFEN
Hutchinson £20 & £8.95

THE RATE of economic growth in the USSR has been falling since the early 1970s. Education and health services have deteriorated. Not enough housing and consumer goods of the type people want have been provided. The economy is permeated by waste of raw materials and equipment. Productivity is deteriorating. In the past, higher growth was achieved through mobilisation of increasing supplies of labour and raw materials and imported food, but this solution will not be available in the future because of the slow down in population growth, deteriorating geological conditions and the fall in the world price of oil, the USSR's chief source of foreign exchange. It is essential to restructure the economic system.

This is the case for *perestroika* made by Abel Aganbegyan, chief economic adviser to Gorbachev. The aim is a move from administrative to economic methods of management.

What this means is that most resource allocation should take place in a decentralised way, in response to price signals (reflecting demand and supply) rather than being determined by Ministries; that enterprises should be self-financing and free to make their own plans; that there should be a feedback mechanism between producers and consumers; and that the structure of incentives should encourage producers to economise. All of which sounds like a good idea — but raises two questions. Will it work? Is it socialism?

Aganbegyan admits that there are some difficult obstacles to overcome; in particular, the prices of food products, which have long been well below the costs of production, must be substantially raised. This will of course not be popular but, to soften the blow, it is proposed to offer some compensation to consumers, perhaps in the form of bonuses paid on top of wages. However, under the new system in which enterprises have to be self-financing and cover their own costs, including labour, paying food bonuses would reduce their profitability and might lead to unemployment. Alternatively, since most enterprises will be free to set their own prices, they might pay for the food bonuses by raising prices . . . which would then undermine the improvement of incentives for agricultural production, which the rise in food prices was supposed to provide.

There is, in fact, no way of compensating consumers for rising food prices except through increases in productivity. Which leads to a problem of timing. And the question is, to what extent is the urban population willing to bear the transitory costs of restructuring until increased output becomes available.

The costs are likely to fall more heavily on manual workers, since the wages of technical, professional and managerial workers are being substantially increased. Besides, this latter group stands to gain in other ways from restructuring.

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The devolution of decision-making powers from Ministries to enterprises will weaken the central bureaucracy but strengthen the position of managerial and technical staff in enterprises.

Ordinary workers will have the right to elect managers but it is doubtful that this will give them any real control over decision-making within enterprises. Aganbegyan's proposed solution — dividing enterprise employees into brigades to which enterprise managements would subcontract certain tasks — is practicable in agriculture and construction, where the production process is divisible, but not in many kinds of manufacturing, where system-wide economics of scale or scope are important. It also increases the workers' risk, without giving them control over many of the decisions that determine their productivity (such as the choice of equipment) and the sales performance of the enterprise (such as design of product).

A better solution in large-state enterprises would be to make basic wages independent of enterprise performance, with bonuses related to enterprise performance; and to provide workers with more control over their work through on-going negotiations over working practices and enterprise strategy between their independently chosen representatives and enterprise management.

Perestroika clearly implies the real possibility, for the first time, of workers being made redundant. Is this compatible with socialism? Aganbegyan argues that it is, so long as unemployment is not deliberately used as a weapon to discipline workers and provision is made for redeployment and retraining of workers, so that the unemployment is merely transitional.

The development of wholesale trading between enterprises is regarded as posing no problems: markets are argued to be quite compatible with socialism provided that there is public ownership of the major means of production and that private enterprises are not permitted to employ wage labour (co-operatives and self-employment are fine and are to be promoted). But market co-ordination of decisions taken by self-financing enterprises has a built-in tendency to become competition *for* the market, manipulating consumers, employing predatory practices against other enterprises and depressing wages and working conditions of ordinary workers.

What is needed are forms of economically rational price determination and feedback between producers and consumers, which provide some of the advantages of the market without its disadvantages. Much more thought needs to be given to exactly how the links between buyers and sellers are to be organised. The market itself needs to be socialised, so that decisions to buy and sell are not taken in a piecemeal, atomised way; and the goals of each buyer and seller are not myopically pursued at the expense of everyone else.

Oscar Lange's contribution to the debate on market socialism in the 1930s provided some clues as to how price determination can be socialised yet flexible and economically rational. New information technology makes this a practical possibility. While non-profit-making organisations, such as consumer co-operatives, provide alternative models for organising feedback between producers and consumers. The organisation of decentralised, efficiency-promoting, economic co-ordination is too important a matter to be left in the hands of marketing managers; the socialising of the market requires the creation of new institutions: non-profit-making, socially responsible "market makers", which will hold the ring between producers and consumers. Otherwise, the result of *perestroika* could simply be to enhance the power and living standards of managers and technocrats at the expense of ordinary workers.

The cats are out in force tonight

Lawrence Dale

The cats are out in force tonight.
One walked in front of me as I made my way
Gloomily from Kilburn tube to home.
It ducked beneath the shadow of a van.

I crouched down, blew kisses through my lips.
Soon I had it run towards me,
Bat my hand, jump up, throw itself
High, playful, without shame: Another came

And met the first cat snout to snout.
They squared off silently, then gave up,
Rubbed each other's cheeks in passing,
And left, their tails vertical, diverging.

I stood up, buffed the fur from my hand
Onto my coat, and smiled. I had had all I needed.
At home, I wrote you a short letter
With the words "Return to sender if not received".

Lawrence Dale is an undergraduate at University College London.

In the name of God

Olivia Harris

The Missionaries
NORMAN LEWIS *Secker* £10.95

"ALL'S FAIR in war, and for us this is a war of souls." That opinion, voiced by one of the more frank of the missionaries described by Norman Lewis, encapsulates the Christian evangelising impulse in its most devastating form. An apparently compulsive need to eradicate pleasure, and an obdurate belief in the spiritual values of hard work and a sense of sin, are coupled with the unshakeable conviction that they and they alone are carrying out God's will.

Starting with a brief flashback to the conversion of Tahiti and neighbouring Pacific Islands by tough-minded brethren of the London Missionary society in the late 18th century, Lewis weaves together a portrait mainly of Protestant fundamentalists from the USA. He draws on his experiences as traveller and journalist among different tribal groups — the Montagnard peoples of Vietnam, the Guatemalan Maya-Quiché, the Huichol areas of Northern Mexico, Ayoreo of Eastern Bolivia, Aché of Paraguay and the Venezuelan Panare — to present a sombre and disturbing indictment of the bigoted, destructive and, in some cases, openly sadistic behaviour of missionaries.

In recent decades some sectors of the Catholic Church have rejected the classic missionary vocation as they came to appreciate both the class dimensions of the Church and the spiritual richness of the cultures they were trying to undermine. As they increasingly failed in their function as the shock troops of ideological warfare and control, they have been replaced in many areas by Protestant fundamentalists. Whatever the conscious intentions of the latter, there is no doubt that their religious message is integrally linked to a particular set of social and economic values, and that they are closely connected with right-wing politics and, in at least some cases, with the State Department. The impact of Protestant fundamentalism on the recent tragic history of Guatemala, for example, is well known.

Another example is Paraguay where, in 1942, the New Tribes Mission was given a contract by General Stroessner to "settle and civilise" the Indians of the Gran Chaco. It is very convenient for hard-pressed regimes to hand over the control and indoctrination of sparsely populated and remote areas to well-funded, disciplined and unswervingly dedicated foreigners who will promote economic development. They build roads and air strips, they educate the previously independent tribal groups into a state of humility and ignorance and encourage dependence on manufactured goods.

The tactics are often cynical and effective: "gifts" are distributed to encourage an interest in wage labour, or a social outcast such as a cripple is targetted and showered with prestigious goods so that he becomes the centre of envious attention. Another strategy is to reward "acculturated"

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groups for rounding up their relatives still outside the sphere of mission influence so that they can be resettled in what in some instances amount to little more than concentration camps, providing cheap labour for local employers, often under appalling conditions.

But even where governments are not enthusiastic about the activities of such people it is not easy to get rid of them. The New Tribes Mission and the Summer Institute of Linguists — probably the two best organised and most powerful of the fundamentalist missions working in Latin America — have strongholds which are virtually impervious to national governments. Lewis quotes the example of a Bolivian minister who admitted that even he had to ask permission from the SIL in order to travel in an area controlled by them. In the case of several Latin American countries from which they have been officially expelled, they find ways of remaining or re-entering to carry on with their work.

Religious conversion affects every aspect of life. One convert quoted by Lewis reports: "God wants us to wear pants. He wants us to use money. He tells us that we have to work hard to get our food. He does not want to see us lying around in hammocks. . . God wants us to use soap, to wash under the armpits." The disapproval of the easy life enjoyed by the primitives is an old theme of missionary history; some two centuries ago, during the forcible conversion of the Polynesian population, one Mr Orsmond, believing that "a too bountiful nature diminishes men's natural desire to work", ordered all the breadfruit trees to be cut down.

We must recognise that it is comparatively easy for well-wishers in metropolitan countries to appreciate the extraordinary richness of tribal cultures. Those living the reality of the frontier have little time for anthropological niceties. It is only recently, by dint of well-orchestrated political action and lawsuits, that the remnants of tribal peoples in many different countries have begun to force recognition of their demands onto an indifferent world. But we must also recognise that the civilization in which we live rests on the "heart of darkness": a world of calculated brutality and wholesale extermination in which the suppression of pleasure by missionaries has played its part.

Written in an anecdotal and accessible style, and with a seasoned traveller's eye for the vivid and the surreal — the ghastly smile fixed on the face of the missionary, the prostitute sweltering in her mauve feather boa in the tropical heat — Lewis' accounts seems substantially correct. But, given the gravity of the charges, his interpretations of some of the things he has witnessed seem impressionistic, based on questionable intuitions.

More serious is the unswervingly romantic light in which he portrays the tribal cultures as happy, carefree children enjoying the bounty of nature, and then subjected to the senseless law of puritanical Christianity. This trope, so central to the rhetoric of colonial discourse of all political persuasions, cannot be sustained today. It requires a damaging silence about the less utopian aspects of tribal life; it also allows little room for a recognition of the legitimate political rights and current reorganisations of tribal groups; and it leaves the unwary reader with only a sense of outrage, and of regret for the passing of a way of life that is gone for ever. □

ARTS

Charlie Sheen (left) with Michael Douglas — like father, like son?

Man for our season

On Wall Street today, the Good Father figure isn't necessarily the nice guy, says **JUDITH WILLIAMSON**

THERE IS A NEW, glossy magazine on the news stands at the moment called *Excel*. Aimed at the aspiring young businessman, it contains fashion, psychological tips about getting ahead, financial advice — but what is really a sign of our times is its glamour: a sort of *Playboy* with the sex taken out, it represents the extraordinary eroticisation of money in this sexually troubled era.

The financial flow-chart is the centre-fold pin-up; looking good is for impressing clients, not lovers; keeping fit is about performance at the office, not in bed. For the young and ambitious the flow of anxiety can now run seamlessly from the world of the Clearasil ad to the world of the clearing bank.

It is through this world that **Wall Street** (15, Odeon Leicester Square) propels its fresh-faced investment broker Bud Fox (Charlie Sheen) — whose name echoes that of Michael J. Fox, hero of *Secret of My Success*. Both films start with a young man trying to push his way into business: in *Secret* this initially involves getting *any* job in a big company, while in *Wall Street* the Sheen character is already a broker and the push is for a big financial client, Gordon Gekko (Michael Douglas) — but their equivalent scenes are extremely similar in that they show a young man using enormous ingenuity, sheer persistence and desperate *chutzpah*, just to gain an *audience*, in both cases, with an older and more powerful man. The energy that goes into "being seen", in these scenarios, suggests a strongly oedipal relationship.

In *Platoon* Oliver Stone placed young GI Charlie Sheen between Good and Bad Fathers Sergeants Elias and Barnes — the former mellow and cynical about the outcome of the war, the latter obsessive and desperate to win. Not only is Sergeant Elias the repository of the film's own morality — showing compassion, courage, etc. — his view of the Vietnam war has been proved *right*: he is on the side of history.

In *Wall Street*, however, the Good and Bad Fathers are placed differently in history. Gekko, the charismatic and ruthless financier who takes Fox under his wing to make money for both of them, is clearly on paper the baddy. The Good Father is Bud Fox's (and Sheen's) own father, a mechanic and union rep with a small airline who unknowingly provides his son with the inside information which lets him into the charmed Gekko set. The Conflict of the Fathers climaxes when Gekko's plan for buying the airline — masterminded by Fox Jr. — turns out to involve closing it down, selling off its assets, and spending the pension fund. When Bud finally crosses his mentor by switching the sale to a rival investor, Gekko, having covered his own tracks, lets Fox get arrested for insider dealing. However, ultimately Fox betrays Gekko by taping his "I taught you everything you know" speech at their last, dramatic showdown. He ends up true to his own father: "I'm going to create, instead of living off the buying and selling of others."

This distinction between producing, and merely buying and selling money, is stressed throughout — the occasional glimpse of the Fox father (Martin Sheen) in overalls, spanner in hand, provides the contrasting image. But the film isn't really about

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the opposition of labour and capital so much as that of industry and finance — and this is where its context inflects its imagery and values despite the "ideologically sound" plot. With the near-collapse of the traditional industrial infrastructure, capitalism — ever adaptable — has shifted bases from industrial capital to finance capital; father Fox represents a morality whose base is declining, while father Gekko represents an idea whose time has apparently come. The alignment of the film's *sub*text with this idea is probably unintentional, given Stone's strong "message" — yet Gekko is the heart of the film, visually and in terms of energy: he gives out warmth despite his ruthlessness, while the real father is given very little screen time and no memorable lines (Gekko's "lunch is for wimps" being my favourite). We are offered no insight into the Fox father's life or feelings, while Gekko is given frequent opportunities to explain himself and his motives.

The most powerful of these comes at the AGM of a company which he takes to task, in the middle of taking it over, for wastage and inefficiency. The speech he gives is the centre of the film and perhaps also hits something that illuminates the concept of "being on the side of history". In his impassioned plea to the shareholders Gekko invokes greed as not only good, but in tune with nature: "Greed *works*, greed captures the evolutionary spirit, greed will save the USA . . . " and so on. It is the Darwinian evocation of evolution which suggests that at some level the film is very much concerned with being on the side of the times. Its energetic camera really gets off on the share price figures gliding across the screens of the broking room; there is an orgiastic little scene in Fox's new flat where a battery of electronic-age cooking equipment is used to produce home-made sushi, fresh pasta, advertisement-style food.

Since people are going on about the '60s/'80s difference at the moment I'll throw my bit in: if this were the '60s Bud's father *would* be glamourised — would be the repository of masculinity, strong, sexy, with that metaphorical muscularity which comes from being on the ascendant (think of Albert Finney, and the glamour and sexiness of being working-class in the films and novels of that time). The financiers and businessmen, on the other hand, would be — indeed were seen through '60s eyes to be — sterile, dry, weak, boring pasty faces behind the *Financial Times* on commuter trains. But the business drama is the thriller of our times; the working-class hero (Gekko is non-WASP, a City College boy, Fox's father is a mechanic) rises and falls in what is essentially a gangster film without guns: the structure is the same. And both gangsters and businessmen really want one thing — MORE. "How many yachts can you waterski behind?" Fox asks Gekko — but this drama isn't about use-value. It's about exchange.

For money represents value; and this is the great era, supposedly, of representation. The referent, the thing represented, slides off into history. If Bud's father creates value, nevertheless he has no part to play in its shiny surface, where our present-day dramas take place. Stone's '60s morality is ineffectually acted out in the imagery of the '80s. It is ironic that, in fact, so much of our economy is now predicated on credit, the primacy of representation so beloved of Baudrillard finds — paradoxically — a real referent in the exchanges of this world of finance. □

THEATRE

Bingo or Baldwin?

Paul Allen

REMEMBER THE ARTS COUNCIL? Nice people. Honourable record in the '60s of establishing a network of theatres which made sure that art could be within the reach — geographically and financially — of 90 per cent of the British population.

Hopelessly anachronistic of course, once it became clear that art was regarded with something surprisingly akin to hatred by both sides in the new, sourer political climate. A few shamefaced ghosts still wander, keening, round the corridors of 105 Piccadilly, pushing sums of money to and fro, seeding the theatres' enterprise in something called "the highly competitive leisure industry".

That phrase is Mark Everett's. He is general manager at Birmingham Rep but is not to be dismissed as merely a manager and likely to be a philistine. He is a former Arts Council drama officer who carried a torch for new writing. His is an assessment typical of the "realistic" approach to the theatre's commercial position today. It *does* have to compete with bingo, squash and a night in the boozer. That is the status to which we have reduced it.

Two things have brought on this mood. The first was a meeting of the executive of the board of a large regional theatre on which I sit. For the financial year just begun we have an income of about £1.1 million before we count the (unknown) box office take of our own shows.

But there are fixed costs (lighting, heating, rates, etc.) and costs which no modern theatre can sensibly operate without (publicity, front-of-house staff, catering) and, when you add these up, our best estimate of the money available for shows is about £150,000. In other words £1 million in subsidy only provides a fragment for the thing that is supposed to be the point of the whole operation, the work on stage.

Of the sum available two thirds will pay for the theatre-in-education company. One third can pay for a studio season. So the main house has to be self-financing. No money at all for art, if you take art to be something that includes the possibility of being unpopular but will not stay in the ghetto.

This is what Sir Peter Hall has been banging on about for years. What I think is only just becoming clear is the effect it is having on the kind of theatre we have got. The search for sources of income beyond state or local authority subsidy is welcomed by Luke Rittner at the Arts Council on the grounds that the more sources there are the better it must be. The truth is different: the more sources, the blander.

First, sponsorship. It is famously true that even the National Theatre could not find sponsorship for *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* because of the nasty last word in the title. The Lyric, Hammersmith, tried hard for sponsorship for its ambitious marathon production of Goethe's *Faust*. More than 300 approaches were made, with no response except for £1,000 from the Goethe Institute, which is state sponsorship anyway.

Second, box office. If there really were easy answers to this one we should all be as rich as Andrew Lloyd Webber. However, we haven't done badly in Sheffield. We have played to around 800 people a night for two years now, which is more than the entire capacity of some London commercial theatres. What we do not yet know is whether this is at a net cost to art. A production of the little-known contemporary German play, Botho Strauss' *The Park*, played to 380 people a night and some of those came out tearing up their subscription cards.

Then there's something called "improved financial management". We've done that too. Like many theatres we even put our subsidy onto the money markets where it can earn in interest enough to finance some studio shows. Of course it could be commissioning a writer . . .

The fact is that all forms of funding now mean, as Peter James, artistic director at Hammersmith says, "You've got to be popular with somebody." When you are offering the public another choice in the highly competitive leisure industry you end up — as the plush regional reps are beginning to do — trying to sell not art but a luxury consumer package. I am in favour of decent theatres where you can sit in comfort, buy a drink and read an intelligent programme. But the logic of consumerist theatre is that the play is part of the comfort: nothing disturbing, nothing to take the spirit into unfamiliar territory, no art.

One tragedy is that the left has, in its own way, been drawn into the same uninterest in art as the new right. While Norman Tebbit says he doesn't see the difference between nudes in the *Sun* and the National Gallery, the left puts strings on its art subsidy by trying to quantify it in terms of anti-racism and anti-sexism. Yes, councils must attack those ugly, criminal things. Art, ultimately asserting humanity, will do it in the end; and may in particular instances do it on the way. But work about which you know your feelings before it begins isn't committed to exploration enough to be called art.

I said that two things have induced this mood. The second was seeing *The Mahabharata* in Glasgow. After the last few weeks *NS* readers may have become sick of reading of Peter Brook and all his works. The only point I want to make is that not only has Britain, committed to its theatre buildings, not found ways of subsidising art-people like Brook; it is creating a climate in which Brook types cannot be produced.

Art and ambition are not yet dead, thanks largely to individuals. Clare Venables is proposing Schiller, James Baldwin and Beaumarchais for Sheffield next season; Faust may well have put the Lyric back on course; the Royal Exchange in Manchester and the Glasgow Citizens theatre continue to range freely about the classics; Annie Castledine at Derby is about to reach the climax of a courageous and often stirring season with another unknown German play, *Sunday's Children*, about growing up under Hitler. Other straws in the wind are less optimistic: will art be talked about when the Royal Court decides Max Stafford-Clarks future? Was it on the agenda when Alan Strachan's contract was not renewed at Greenwich? It can't be killed entirely but the aspirations of the '60s look sick today. They will survive the next 20 years if we believe in them for themselves, not only as part of specific social, educational and economic debates. □

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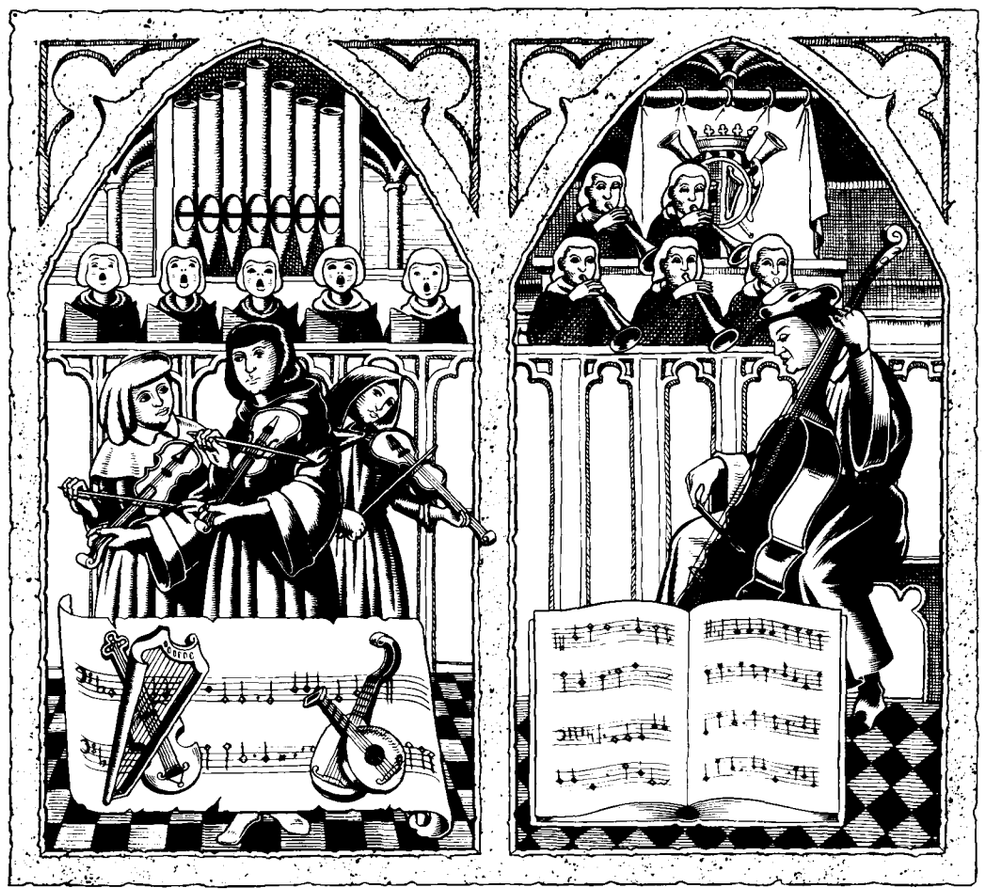

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JAZZ

Delicious delirium

Charles Fox

Swing — Small Groups, 1931 to 1936
BBC REB666
Jumpin' For Joy
TEDDY WILSON & HIS ORCHESTRA
Affinity AFS1044
Armful o' Sweetness
FATS WALLER & HIS RHYTHM
Saville SVL 182
Swing — Big Bands, 1929 to 1936
BBC REB655

WE INSIST on imposing tidiness on the past — which accounts for the way jazz is often seen as coming up with a major change of style just as one decade finishes and another decade begins. The explanation probably lies in the way that jazz has been shaped by economic and social events — the Armistice, the Wall Street Crash, World War II — that were also separated by ten-year intervals. And the fact that jazz shifted its headquarters to New York, the centre for song-publishing and radio, never a blues town in the sense that New Orleans and Chicago and Kansas City were, played a part in giving the music of the 1930s a different identity.

Bearing in mind the plight of the USA throughout most of that decade the music on all four of these LPs is, paradoxically, buoyant and confident. There are exceptions: Jimmie Noone's "Blues Jumped a Rabbit", for instance, recorded as it happens in Chicago, with Noone's clarinet looping extravagantly and Guy Kelly blowing a sober trumpet solo and singing words that have little to do with the big city ("The blues jumped a rabbit, ran him a solid mile/The poor fellow lied down and cried like a natural child").

Noone's little band is one of five all-black groups — the others are Barney Bigard's Jazzopators, Jones-Smith Incorporated (really a Count Basie quintet, with Lester Young making his recording debut), Fats Waller's Rhythm and a pick-up group led by Teddy Wilson — that turn up on **Swing — Small Groups**. The Charleston Chasers, Red Nichols and his Five Pennies and the Mound City Blue Blowers (mostly recruited from Bob Crosby's band) are all-white.

On the remaining eight tracks, black and white musicians mingle, as they did occasionally on records during the '20s and were to do more and more in public — especially in New York — as the '30s rolled on. "Swing Is Here" has Benny Goodman's drummer, Gene Krupa, directing a group that includes Goodman but also the then inseparable partnership of Roy Eldridge, somersaulting on trumpet, and tenor saxophonist Chu Berry, starting his solo by circling like a bumble bee. From the all-in opening to the closing riffs this is what contemporary jargon called a jam session.

The disciplines of New Orleans jazz, suddenly unfashionable, had been abandoned with the '20s. There continued to be neat little arrangements — like those Glenn Miller devised for the Charleston Chasers and for Red Nichols or that Bigard planned for his line-up of Ellingtonians — but

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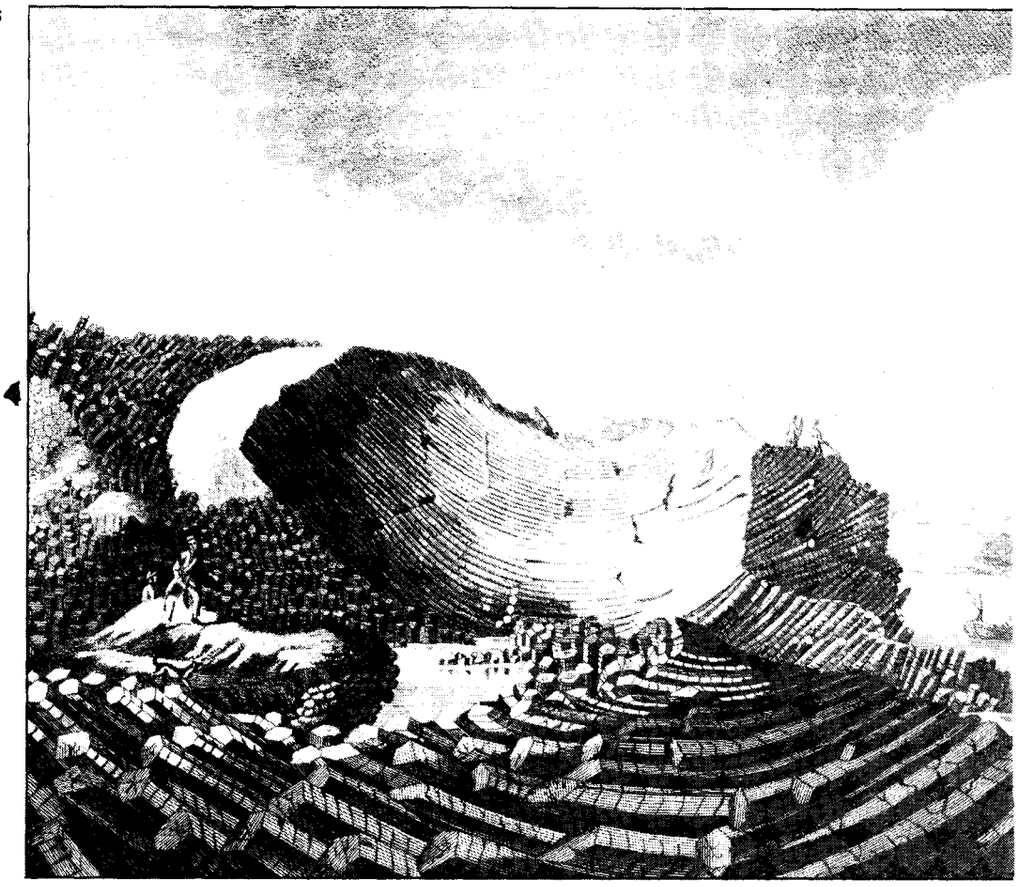
mostly musicians met in clubs or recording studios and simply bounced ideas off one another.

Quite a few of them earned a living by working in big bands. Bunny Berigan, for instance, a trumpeter who died far too young, is on hand in several of the small groups (he's riotously exuberant in Bud Freeman's "The Buzzard") as well as in Benny Goodman's "King Porter Stomp" (a Fletcher Henderson arrangement of a tune Jelly Roll Morton wrote before World War I) recorded in 1935, just on the brink of the swing era. For reasons parallel to those which 20 years later saw Elvis Presley and Bill Haley serving up blues for young Americans, the most popular — and most publicised — of the swing bands were white. Few of those get represented on **Swing — Big Bands**, a curiously uneven collection, yet containing such items as Don Redman's "Hot and Anxious" (the opening riff for saxophones anticipated "In The Mood" by the better part of a decade), Jimmie Lunceford's Orchestra at its stealthiest in "Harlem Shout" and Louis Armstrong, with a nicely relaxed Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra in the background, putting a fresh gloss on King Oliver's historic three trumpet choruses in "Dippermouth Blues". (Robert Parker's tinkering with the original 78s has brought a splendid clarity — especially inside the rhythm sections — to the performances on both the BBC LPs.)

The new nationwide audience for swing music (the word jazz, not for the last time, had suddenly become passé) was familiar neither with the older repertoire nor the niceties of tradition. Bands helped to hold their interest by relying more and more on arrangements of current pop songs. No examples are to be encountered in the big band collection but plenty occur on **Jumpin' for Joy** and **Armful o' Sweetness.** Three or four songs are transformed — the word for once is apt — by Billie Holiday who, had she been born ten years earlier, would probably have grown up a blues singer. Also taking part, recruited by Wilson for these pick-up groups, were soloists as distinguished as Eldridge and Buck Clayton, Lester Young and Benny Carter, all working for the minimum union rate. The most impressive of the purely instrumental numbers, "Just a Mood", comes with a gap in the middle of Wilson's piano solo, the consequence of being recorded as a double-sided 78. Red Norvo contributes delicate xylophone traceries, Harry James reveals how heartfelt his blues could be.

If Teddy Wilson took the tunes offered to him and sorted out routines in the studio, Fats Waller had been doing the same since he started recording with his Rhythm in 1934. (All the band recordings he made that year can be found on *Armful o' Sweetness.*) Where Wilson's piano style was a gentle distillation of Earl Hines' buccaneering approach, Waller had been one of the Harlem "stride" pianists of the '20s, self-sufficient, deploying a powerful left hand. The '30s found him cultivating a roguish manner, happy to inject arsenic into the most harmless lyrics, encouraging and admonishing his musicians as they jammed enthusiastically. None of those musicians comes across more excitingly than Bill Coleman, arguably the most underrated trumpet player in jazz history. He rarely flew more blithely than in "Believe It Beloved", which also has Waller declaiming the line "Delicious, delightful delirium" with a relish that summed up his popular persona — if not the entire decade. □



Detail from Staffa engraving — a past view of present mysteries

ART

Backwards to nature

Brandon Taylor

The Staffa Project: Ian McKeever and Thomas Joshua Cooper
Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol
The Iconography of Landscape
ed. DENIS COSGROVE and STEPHEN DANIELS
Cambridge £30

WITHIN THE SPECTRUM of contemporary responses to the landscape, **The Staffa Project**, undertaken as a collaboration by the painter Ian McKeever and the photographer Thomas Joshua Cooper, occupies a position which is in many ways symptomatic. Following a camping trip to Staffa, that remote uninhabited island in the Hebrides which contains Fingal's Cave at its southern extremity, McKeever and Cooper produced a variety of images which variously record, marvel at and mystify what is by any account one of the strangest geological formations in the British Isles: a rock of basalt thrown millions of years ago into sharp vertical formations and now thrusting anomalously out of the sea.

Cooper makes dark, brooding, quietly demonic pictures, beautifully printed and intensely composed. McKeever combines torn photographs and skeins of paint into a collage of scattered fragments, arranged on a large, abstract-expressionist scale. The collaboration involved working alongside each other rather than jointly, sharing thoughts, conversations and the rigours of camping in a desolate and lonely place.

At their best, they bring into focus a type of response to nature which was characteristic of the 19th-century, particularly in its early part; one which marvelled at the sheer diversity and immensity of nature's forces. Nineteenth-century naturalists, as well as artists like Turner and the apostles of Pre-Raphaelitism, believed that natural wonders were the direct evidence of God; hence their attention to the minute forms of crystals, flowers, fossils and living things. The wilder phenomena such as storms, high seas and precipitous mountains demonstrated the power and the magnificence of the creator.

But the collapse of theology as a way of perceiving the world made it culturally moot whether nature could be regarded as more than just blind matter; whether Romanticism could survive without its theology. Broadly, this was the position around 1850. By the 1980s, presumably, we wish to flatter ourselves that we can transcend this dilemma; yet it is not immediately obvious that McKeever and Cooper have managed to show us how.

Certainly, the spirit of the 19th-century naturalist pervades both their methods and their means of expression. The catalogue — in this, as in so many cases, the real text of the exhibition — is best described as an updated Victorian record-book of historical specimens, more appropriate to the days of Philip Gosse than to those of ICI or Brit Oil. As well as 18th- and 19th-century engravings of

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Staffa, it comes replete with the testaments of famous visitors to the island such as Boswell, Johnson, Keats, J.M.W. Turner and Mendelssohn, who were all chasing the ideal of the sublime response to nature and the last of whom reputedly composed the opening of the Hebrides Overture on the boat.

It also contains chummy statements from our artists on the joys of camping, the romance of the cliff-top and the blasphemous intrusion into the happy scene of boat-loads of tourists. (There is also a deeply spiritual "appreciation" of this particular approach to nature, about which the less said the better. In its pure mystificatory unfolding of the tao of setting up a camera, it has to be read to be believed.)

On the face of it, the diagnosis looks grim. However, what redeems the Staffa Project is our knowledge that the antiquarian position adopted by McKeever and Cooper is, at the same time, a deeply modern one — even a postmodern one, which in this instance means much the same thing. That is, they are happy for the experiences of Keats and Mendelssohn to circulate around their work, in part because cultural eclecticism is fashionable, but more pertinently because Romanticism still supplies a basis for responding to the natural world which is, after all, now threatened by acid rain, the plunder of forests and the possibility of the annihilation of nature altogether. This may seem paradoxical. But the ecology movement, which constitutes perhaps the most progressive account of landscape today and which itself is an offshoot of the Romantic view of nature, does not supply a *visual* aesthetic of nature; only a strictly preservationist one. We may thus find ourselves excusing the Romanticism of the Staffa project on the grounds that it introduces visual meanings into what, from ecology by itself, is missing.

The idea of the desert — which in one sense is what Staffa has always been — is suggested as a metaphor for our threatened existence by Peter Fuller, in his contribution to Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels' **The Iconography of Landscape**. This is a set of essays on the significations of landscape, mostly from within the discipline of historical geography, which is now both enriching and learning from the history of art. There are quite a few examples here of how iconography — the method invented by Erwin Panofsky of analysing signs — can unlock the ideological, social and historical meanings of country as well as townscape imagery, and compare these meanings with social reality as given by statistics, economics and sociology.

It is a valuable volume, for much of this imagery, whether it be a river scene by Richard Wilson, Rocque's map of London and Westminster of 1775, or the plan for the siting of the Opéra in Second Empire Paris, turns out to constitute various forms of masking, even betrayal, of the true condition of the rural and urban population. Such analyses bring to light the true function of landscape — and the major part of the landscape tradition in art — as domination, little more nor less. And this is where the cases of Staffa, and the desert, come back in. Since no one could ever live in these remote places, they escaped the problems associated with representing the relationship of human beings to the land — until tourists, Romantics and artists flooded back in. □

TELEVISION

The very grand tour

W. Stephen Gilbert

TELEVISION BROADENS the mind, doesn't it. You can see the world through the box and you don't even have to go to a bucket shop.

Courtesy of Granada's Arts Department, I spent an hour of last Tuesday evening in Florence. It was a pretty frantic hour: we zipped to and fro, gazing into the heavily filtered glare of dark streets, wondering if this character or that was a poseur, an actor or just a basket case. In short order we encountered addiction, murder, kidnap, terrorism, transvestism, trans-sexuality and prostitution. Just in case we missed how ominous this all was, some pretty insistent music let us know. I was all for taking the next ad-break out.

Death in Florence was the first fruit of a new unit set up under the wise and experienced David Boulton. Granada has a long and distinguished record in documentary, in particular the kind of documentary — anathema to some — which uses actors. Equally, the company has enjoyed a perpetual penchant for the rabbit-out-of-the-hat approach to programmes, a style much indulged on its old flagship *World in Action* (great to see again the 1967 edition in which Mick Jagger was choppered in to meet the establishment).

The Arts Department, or at least its first film, seemed to pool these traditions and stir in an extra dash of impressionism. The director Andrew Piddington is quoted in the press release as saying, "It is very different from anything you would find in Britain," but you can't blame a man for what the press release has him say. However, he has made a film of remarkable silliness, as though he had been playing at being Martin Scorsese without doing the real hard work.

The only brilliant stroke in the piece was the participation of one Magdalen Nabb. I wasn't entirely sure whether she was a real person or an invention for the programme: after all, she left Ramsbottom for Florence, where she's lived for 15 years writing crime novels the titles of which all begin with the word *Death* (yes, like *Death in Florence*). Her adopted city provides all her raw material, so she lightly observes. Thus, transsexual prostitutes simply "occur as part of the scenery . . . they're candidates, ready-made victims". Kidnapping is "so very Florentine". That she has the look of the Madonna who got the cream adds to the blithe cool.

On Wednesday, as we're invited to do every Wednesday for seven weeks, we criss-crossed the Atlantic in the company of David Dimbleby. As was the opener, the second episode of **An Ocean Apart** was highly distinguished, even unbearably so. The whole research effort is clearly prodigious, the archive footage is wondrous, the trawl of witnesses congruous and germane — indeed, the input of every kind of material and from every kind of source is inordinate by any standards. But enough is as good as a feast. After half an hour the appetite is satisfied and a turn on deck seems in order. Not a bit of it! On Dimbleby's Cunarder there's no respite: it's gorge, gorge, gorge all the way to New York and back.

As is so often the case, the title sequence catches the quintessence, for good or ill, of the venture. This one tries to tell the whole story of the Special Relationship between the UK and the USA in 48 seconds and to do so in the most literal terms. Save that the series takes 48 hours (give or take a *longueur*) and is, to be fair, considerably less simple-minded, these titles have it about right.

I think the problem, curiously enough, resides in Dimbleby's contract. Visibly, his agent has made one of those deals that provide for the reporter having to deliver at least one to-camera paragraph in each ten-minute segment. It's a pity so many reporters insist on such arrangements because usually (as here) these monologues have the effect of making you acutely conscious of the dense and *un*visual nature of the argument (c.f. notably John Pitman, lone off-camera reporter, whose personality shines through his work without the indulgence of button-holing the viewers and showing off the new wardrobe).

What Dimbleby's to-camera segments reveal, ultimately to the cost of the series, is the unimpeachable conventionality of his thesis. It is very sound, but without flair, a clubman's world-view that they no doubt speak of most warmly at meetings of the BBC Board of Governors. It's the big, fat, coffee-table book series, the one you're still dipping into when the brandy comes round.

On Thursday, there was a cruel choice of trips: Kenya or Gibraltar. Luckily for me, it was no hardship as I had done Kenya at a preview. Molly Dineen's film about a doughty, dogged, difficult old dragon seeking out her days on her little patch of empire, **My African Farm,** was a masterpiece of dispassionate observation. Yet it conveyed a deeper sense of how Britain must have conducted herself as a colonial ruler than any number of big, fat, coffee-table book series ever could.

The Gibraltar excursion was all over the papers, as I expect you saw. **Death on the Rock** was a 50-minute special — *This Week* usually runs at what is called a commercial half-hour — offering new evidence on the killing of three IRA volunteers by the SAS. Reporter Julian Manyon couldn't resist an edge of shrillness in his language though, on reflection, his overstatement of the iniquity of terrorism (the common tongue of television coverage) was cunningly deployed. Because you had grasped where he stood (with the rest of the media), his questioning of the establishment line on these killings carried all the more authority and prompted all the more disquiet. □

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Discretionary benefits

Ken Edwards, London SE17

Ben Pimlott (*NS* 15 April) is wrong to say that the Social Security Act is not radical. The main significance of the benefit changes seems to have eluded many commentators and, apparently, the Labour opposition: that is, they represent an erosion of people's rights.

The point about the Social Fund, for example, is not so much that the money has been cut; single payments were already slashed last year. It isn't even that it introduces loans instead of grants. The point is that the Social Fund is *discretionary*. Nobody is entitled as of right to make any claims on it, and nobody turned away can effectively appeal against the decision.

To take another example: when disability charities pointed out that thousands of severely disabled people would lose out with the benefit changes, the government's response was to set up the £5 million a year Independent Living Fund in compensation. But again, grants from the fund's trustees will be discretionary.

It seems clear as daylight that the government's ultimate objective is to make *all* welfare benefits discretionary, doled out to the poor and weak at the whim of the great and good. The Social Security Act is the first step in that direction.

Give them back to the members

Russell Miller, Editor, Building Societies Members Assoc. Newsletter, Barnstaple, Devon

So Campbell Adamson wants to convert the Abbey National from a mutual society into a "seedy plc"? Quite rightly, Francis Wheen (*NS* 22 April) criticises the Chairman's attempts to avoid debate among the society's depositors. It is a matter that should be fully debated; plcs risk take-over and the ultimate fate of the Abbey could be members' funds controlled by City financiers and mortgages held by foreign banks. But neither the undemocratic attitude of the Board nor the prospects of "privatisation" are confined to the Abbey National.

For years building society directors have ignored their obligations as the stewards of what are legally friendly societies. Boards have become self-perpetuating groups of business associates. They manipulate the rules to avoid any outsider trying to represent members' interests being elected.

Paul Barnes's book *Building Societies, the myth of mutuality* (Pluto Press) exposed cases of major building societies using members' funds to finance the business interests of directors and their cronies. The new powers given to them by the government make this much easier. Yet, properly organised, membership power could be a reality. One organisation is trying to do this — the "Building Societies Members Association". It deserves wider support, for there has never been a time when it is so important to ensure that "building societies are given back to their members".

Ben on the stool

Dick Douglas MP, House of Commons

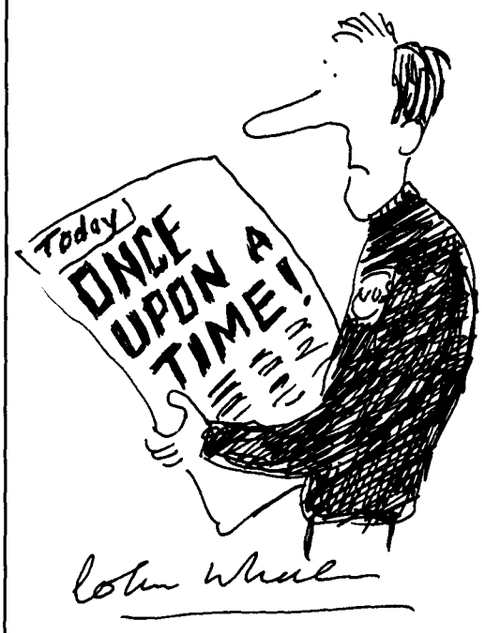
Sorry for apparently boring Edward Pearce but his annoyance is minute compared to my anger at Ben Pimlott being able to write an entire article on the poll tax and ignoring the fact that Thatcher imposed it on Scotland in 1987 and that we are due to pay it in 1989 (*NS* 22 April).

As a good Presbyterian I should have Ben on the penitent stool and you should look to your readership north of the border.

Tricked?

Frank Allaun, Manchester

We have just had another example of anti-trade union bias by most of the British tabloid press. The front page heading in *Today* 25 April (taken over last year by Rupert Murdoch) read: "P and O strike smashed".



Yet today, 28 April, the crews are still solid and indeed the dispute looks like spreading.

The fact, as the paper well knew, is that the P and O directors *planned* to spread the strike. Perhaps many of the National Union of Seamen who went back this week were tricked by that headline.

Librarians: floreat!

Nia Honeybun, Cardiff

Why does David Hine assume that, unlike libraries, librarians have yet to come into the twentieth century? While the content of Helen Birch's article (*NS* 22 April) is informed and fair, the illustration accompanying it persists in perpetuating the myth that all librarians are stern females wearing spectacles and a bun.

It is disturbing that a journal such as the *New Statesman* continues to support this misleading and insulting image of librarians.

Wu Shu

Andrew Davies, Essex

Contrary to Yvonne Roberts' claim (Letters 29 April) few martial arts weapons are available in shops. Those clubs that do teach the use of weapons are few and only teach them as an art form to students of long standing. The weapons used are merely imitations and would be useless for crime and are, anyway, very conspicuous. The most common weapons used in street crime are broken bottles and the craft knife. Ms Roberts could have gleaned much useful information on violence and rape if she had consulted the police. There are at least two ex-policemen teaching martial arts in London, one of whom has had experience of rape cases. They both advertise and are quite approachable.

I too observed the same Wu Shu (not WiShu) class as Ms Roberts. It is not generally considered a martial art, but a synthesis of dance and gymnastics for performance and competitions. It was an introduction for experienced students so that they could decide if they wanted to train for selection to the British squad due to compete in China. This course was not open to the public and all those attending had been with the club for some time. The Master was responsible for a Dragon Dance, performed by his students at the premiere in aid of the Prince's Trust of *The Last Emperor*, and was presented to Princess Diana. Martial Arts groups do a lot of work for charity for which they receive little recognition.

Martial arts have *no* connection with survivalism, other than teaching their practitioners the qualities of humility, respect, discipline, leadership and self-control. The clubs have a high percentage of female students. Are we to apply Ms Roberts's hypothesis to women: "All we need is one young *lady* out of touch with her emotions"?

Advertising litter

Martin Roberts, Glasgow

I haven't noticed the advertising campaign of either Red Stripe or Budweiser (*NS* 15 April). What I have seen today is a pile of about sixty beercans, roughly equally divided between the two brands. If firms were fined according to the degree their products turned up as litter it might do wonders for the environment.

Mensa, mensae, mensam. . .

G. Goatley, Andover, Hants

In keeping with its generally precious image, wouldn't the collective noun for a Mensa group be "a nest of tables"? (*NS* Diary 8 April).

Best wishes on your birthday!

Michael Pickering, London

Last year I would have disagreed with the contention that "you have to be pretty stupid to join Mensa", because membership then carried with it membership of the National Liberal Club: a saving of £60 if you like that sort of thing. But now that this arrangement has terminated, so has my Mensa membership.

World suicide

Dawson Jackson, London NW8

It is heartening to see the *New Statesman* recognise how slow it has been in waking up to little matters like the calamitous danger of nuclear weapons (and nuclear energy?) and the importance of the non-male half of the population. Congratulations!

It remains amazing though that the paper — which I have been reading for 40 years — still does not see that our entire world-wide "culture" is bent on destroying the living earth ("growth"), and with it of course ourselves. The whole spectrum of political parties, with the exception of the Greens, is blind to this; the

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most that any party does is to make a patronizing cosmetic gesture or two. Can the *New Statesman* now be true to the radicalism it has always professed and think out, and work for, the changes — ethical, intellectual, economic, social and national — which will be needed if, already rather late in the day, we are to stop our resolute dash toward world suicide?

Women's work

Michael Turnbull, London

I must correct Jane Dibblin's assertion (*NS* 8 April). There is no "English Collective of Prostitutes/Wages for Housework line that prostitutes are involved in a rebellion which is a cornerstone of a female revolution". Wages for Housework supports prostitutes as women who work. The issue is access to money, not female rebellion. The campaign also seeks to point out the connections between the specific work of prostitutes and the work all women do in a world in which women are debarred from the great part of the world's assets. Most women are forced to be dependent on men one way or another, whether they choose to be or not, and in this sense their labour is prostitution. And the problems Gloria and Lyn faced in escaping violent men and winning autonomy are not specific to prostitutes. They are shared by countless women.

The English Collective of Prostitutes and Wages for Housework's support for prostitutes comes from a recognition of the already existing prostitution of women, whether actually working for money as prostitutes or not. And they point out that prostitutes are able to command a (usually adequate) wage for the work they do in contrast to the larger number of women who provide equal and domestic services for bed and board only. Neither group equates prostitution with liberation, and both raise the crucial issue with regard to women's autonomy: that of access to money.

Infighting

B. A. Miller, Ilford, Essex

Sean Hughes MP (Letters 15 April) appears to be suggesting that a "Labour" Party opposition should be supported without regard to the fact that many of its leading members spend more time criticising colleagues who support democratically decided socialist policies than actively promoting those same policies themselves.

In the run-up to the last election John Cunningham and Roy Hattersley (to name but two) not only failed to argue socialist policies, they made it blatantly clear that they did not, and would not, support party policies.

If the Labour leadership refuses "to listen" to conference and act on socialist policies, then at present there appears to be no obvious viable alternative to Thatcher. Sean Hughes, and others like him, are doing their party a great disservice in complying with the image of disunity promoted by the right-wing press and failing to recognise the consequences.

The challenge for the leadership appears to be the only way policies can get a hearing. I only hope Mr Kinnock will not escalate a campaign against the democratic right of members of his party to challenge the leadership. We must remember who we *should* be fighting and not be afraid to argue on socialist policies.

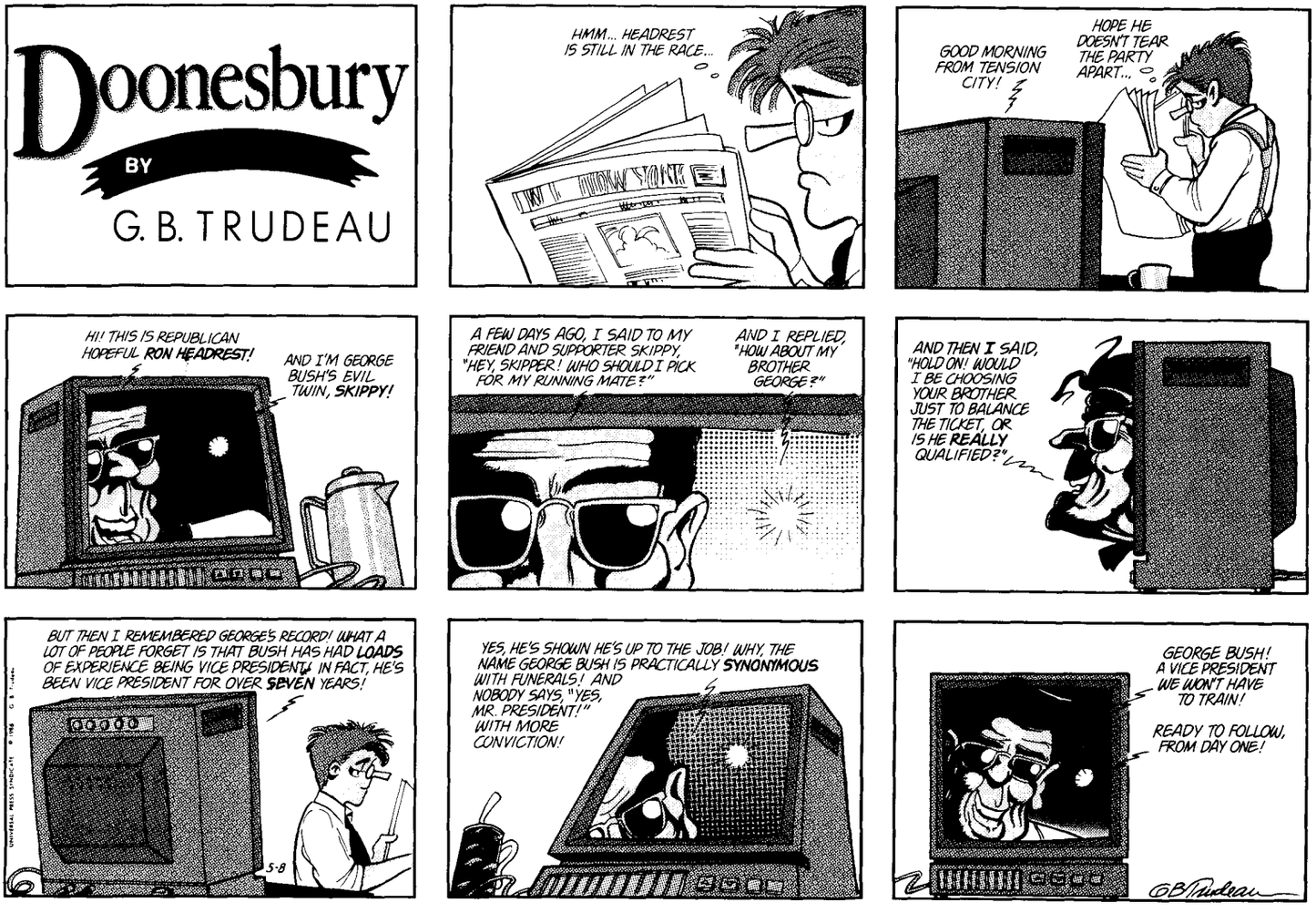
Still no Shangri La

Marcus Tanner, London N7

What fun Jolyon Jenkins had tittering at the Dalai Lama's "big ears". And what a pity his piece on Tibet displayed all the "sentiment and ignorance" which he discerns in the treatment of that much abused country by the "right-wing press" (*NS* 29 April).

Sallying forth against the Tibetan exiles on the grounds that pre-1959 Tibet was no "Shangri-La" and because the Chinese occupation has been the occasion of various egalitarian reforms places Mr Jenkins in the lamentable company of those Catholic dignitaries who, as Mussolini mused to Hitler, "declared the Abyssinian war a Holy war" on the grounds that the Italian occupation was an improvement on "native barbarism". At the risk of being lumped among the devotees of the "right-wing press" I want to assure Tibetan readers of the *New Statesman* that irrespective of Mr Jenkin's vapid outpourings, many of us on the left are intelligent enough to recognise the Chinese occupation of Tibet for what it so palpably obviously is, an abominable example of international bullying based on historic claims as specious as Henry VIII's claim to be king of France.

The references to the Dalai Lama's physiognomy were irrelevant surely. No one would think of including Dubcek's nose or Nelson Mandela's lips in an argument about their respective countries' struggle for freedom.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AGENDA

Deadline: 2pm Mondays

AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY SOCIETY OF THE UK Come along, have a drink and discuss Australian politics in a friendly Aussie atmosphere. Regular guest speakers with an antipodean flavour. We meet on the third Tuesday of each month at the MARQUIS OF GRANBY, CHANDOS STREET, by TRAFALGAR SQUARE, CONTACT KATE O'ROUKE 01-837 8614.

SAT 7 MAY

THE INTERNAL MARKET – the challenge to European Socialists. Speaker: Peter Tatchell. Organisers: Links Europa (05827 5399/01-703 6838) at 195 Walworth Road, London SE17, at 3 p.m.

"AND IF THOU WILT REMEMBER". A portrait of the Victorian poetess Christina Rossetti. Millfield House Arts Centre, Silver Street, Edmonton, London, N18. 7.30 pm. £1.50 (£1 concessions). Details: 01-803 6213.

MON 9 MAY

LONDON HISTORY WORKSHOP SEMINAR. Barry Reay 'The Last Rising of the Agricultural Labourers: The Battle of Bossenden Wood'. 7.30 p.m. at The White Swan, 14 New Row, WC2.

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Weekend competition

No 3024 **Set by E. O. Parrott**

For Comp No 3019 you provided Astonishing Book Titles. Now could you please provide an extract from one of the winning books — which were, to remind you: *The History and Culture of Harlow New Town; Playboy Diplomat: The Life of Sir Geoffrey Howe; Black Power at Westminster; A.J. Ayer and Samantha Fox: The Complete Dialogues; The Confessions of Kurt Waldheim; Son of Abelard; Edith Sitwell as Jazz Trombonist; The Welfare State in the Year 2000; Where I Went Wrong* by Margaret Thatcher; *Kinnock: The Years of Silence; The Wit and Wisdom of Cecil Parkinson; Life and Works of Tony Blackburn; Low-Profile Police Methods in the African Townships; The London Underground Northern Line Timetable; 1001 Easy Ways to Win* NS *Competitions; Johnson's Life of Boswell; John Anderton* by God; *I Spied for Iceland.* Max. 120 words by 18 May.

No 3021 **Set by E. O. Parrott**

Incredible excuses for being late.

Report **By Rosie Hughes**

What reviewers call an *uneven* entry. Among my favourites were the variants on "Sorry I'm late, but the train was on time and I missed it" — but too many people thought of that for any to get a prize. The other recurring feature was Jeffrey Archer. My treasures, when you put the boot in, you do put it *right* in, don't you? Some weeks it's poor mad Edwina, some weeks the dear disturbed Doctor . . . And now it's that flower of the literary scene: loveable, madcap Jeff. Don't you think that a bit of compassion might make a nice change? In any case, £7 a head for the Incredible Excuses below.

Sorry I'm late dearie. You won't believe what happened — the usual is it? I'll just slip out of my clothes. Well, I was going through Victoria Station and you'll never guess who came up to me — being a reporter you'll know him well — he writes all those novels and he used to be a Tory MP — Phil Archer or someone — and he gave me an envelope stuffed with money and told me to leave the country. Of course I argued at first but he insisted so I took the money and what with counting it all it made me late for our appointment — where are you going? I haven't started yet . . .

ROGER E. BRYAN

Well, I was passing the DHSS office when I noticed that there was no queue, so I stopped off and got my benefits and grandad's problem sorted out by this really helpful clerk, and anyway I'm only 15 minutes late because of it . . .

LESLEY LODGE

Sorry, Mr Speaker, but Denis and I were helping an old lady across the road.

FRANCES LOW

I switched on *Wogan* and was so enthralled I couldn't tear myself away.

TIM HOPKINS

I was proceeding on my way to report for duty when a large female of indeterminate years draped in cheesecloth thrust a bundle into my arms saying, "You had your fun, Hervey. Now you look after it." She then disappeared into Boots the Chemists and, having ascertained that the package was a live human infant, sex and age unknown but from its yells sounding hungry, I entered Boots likewise but was unable to see the female personage in cheesecloth as she had rapidly departed by another entrance.

I though it best in the circumstances to leave the infant in the charge of the assistants, as the shop is better supplied with baby foods and bottles than the police station, but explanations and establishing that I was a bona fide police constable took time and I was 23 mins. 16 secs. late in reporting for duty. My name is not Hervey and there is none of that name in my family.

GEORGE MOOR

I set out in good time — I really did. In fact, I was a bit early. That was the trouble. You see, while waiting for the train I bought a copy of the *Independent* and sat down to read it. Immediately, I became so engrossed that time lost all meaning for me. Before I knew what had happened, I'd missed not only the train I'd planned to catch but the one after it as well.

KEITH NORMAN

I went for the *NS*, like you said, and it was on the rack, but there was a chap reading it. Well, the back page, and he looked dead cross and he was muttering a bit and writing in a notebook then he put the paper back and *then* I could get it. Mrs Pegg says he comes every week, usually quite early, and his name's Norman and he never buys it. By the way, I looked. You haven't won anything.

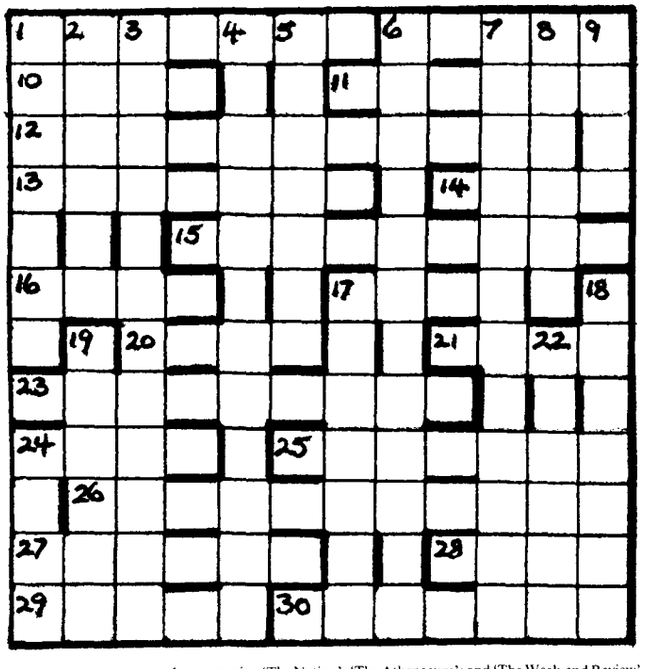
JOHN STANLEY

Salamanca 134

"Plain"

PRIZES: Copies of the *Collins Concise English Dictionary* for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Salamanca 134, New Statesman, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London E2 8DQ, by first post 23 May.

COLLINS DICTIONARIES



ACROSS

1. Where old tournament was held to see who got to the drinks first? (7)
6. Like a compost, one much dug over (5)
10. For a literary part of speech? (4)
11. Queen, as one's given name before? (6)
12. Mun bear tall wavy growth to be so named? (11)
13. E.g. spring, brighter (no start of gloom) for a change (7)
14. More menace initially caused by this fly (4)
15. Pass by visa possibly without note showing time (9)
16. Has its place in feasting, but *not* in France or England, say? (4)
17. Year — this one's not timeless (4)
20. Takes the rubber e.g., E/W partnership playing i 'game —' — & — (4)
21. Little girl some get talking to (4)
23. They help fish and crab inhale on land? No (9)
24. Sharp girl (4)
25. Take care with oil when making it produce heat (7)
26. Spooner's river of soup? You'll find many a one in pubs (11)
27. Ownerless beast, greedy one, running round wild doe (6)
28. Take hold of experience (4)
29. Score this to be victor (that's not weak) (5)
30. Did deny with era gone? (7)

DOWN

1. Nasty brawl — ou, in Scotland this may deal with its causers (7)
2. Helmets encountered in classical art (6)
3. Efrafa for instance, disguised by wild briar, raw and bent (12)
4. One who 'olds lopper, taking away top of tree with this? (12)
5. Corslet possibly found on ploughs (7)
6. Like Miltonic Satan (Chicken Licken wondered had — — ?) (12)
7. Two-laned road for Austins only? (12)
8. Know by instinct one's in fashionable work (6)
9. A bit of atmospherical motionlessness (4)
17. Have I the capacity for being lovable? (7)
18. Like strata, always about in long dead surround (7)
19. Countess faring ill (6)
22. Steal most of this night (6)
24. Tip one's hat (4)

Solution to Salamanca 132

A	P	E	R	I	L	L	E	F	O	O	L
S	T	R	E	Y	Y	O	R	E	N	A	E
S	I	G	N	E	T	S	E	E	E	R	E
P	H	O	H	N	E	E	M	C	D	S	F
I	E	B	W	A	L	L	A	H	R	U	E
C	O	R	O	R	E	S	L	U	E	M	E
T	Y	E	R	O	E	A	E	R	A	R	K
R	O	W	E	D	S	T	I	R	D	A	R
Y	U	Z	B	K	I	E	R	E	A	S	E
P	S	I	U	N	S	R	E	D	G	E	E
E	E	N	L	E	A	N	H	O	E	S	S
A	Z	G	L	E	X	E	T	E	N	S	E

Title, err-go is reverse example of sound-alike grid entries.

Prizewinners to Salamanca 132

Brendan Jackson (Southampton)
F. Barnard (Beaconsfield, Bucks)
R. A. England (London W3)

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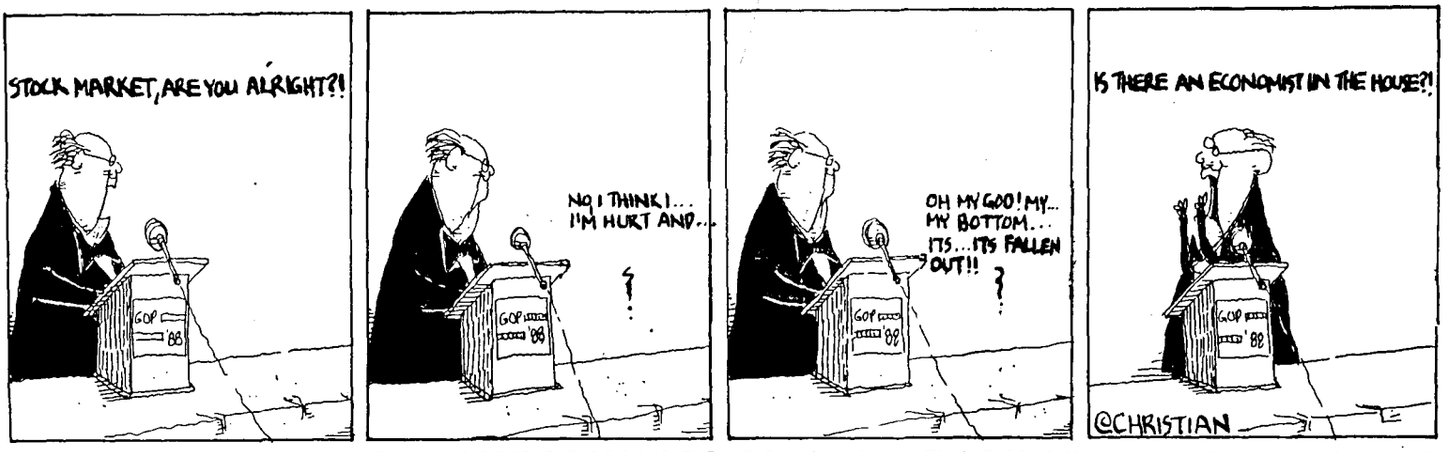

STOCK MARKET, ARE YOU ALRIGHT?!
NO, I THINK I... I'M HURT AND...
OH MY GOD! MY... MY BOTTOM... ITS... ITS FALLEN OUT!!
IS THERE AN ECONOMIST IN THE HOUSE?!
GOP '88
©CHRISTIAN

Chess

SO IN THE end that great survivor the little big man added another first prize to his unequalled record of tournament victories. Leading scores in Brussels were (out of 16 games each): 1. Karpov 11; 2. Salov 10; 3-5. Beliavsky, Ljubojevic and Nunn 9½; 6-7. Andersson and Portisch 9; 8. Speelman 8½. (Since 18 players started, you may be wondering why the scores are not out of 17 games. Unfortunately, the Armenian GM Rafael Vaganian had to withdraw and return home because his brother died during the tournament.)

Karpov's best game was probably his win against Timman, which I gave a fortnight ago. But the game which enabled him to take over the lead from Speelman poses an interesting question. Was the ex-world champion in control throughout, or did the English GM's exchange sacrifice deserve a better fate?

Karpov-Speelman, SWIFT World Cup 1988. QGA.
1. d4 d5 2. c4 dxc4 3. e4 Nf6 4. e5 Nd5 5. Bxc4 Nb6 6. Bb3 Nc6 7. Be3 Bf5 8. Ne2 e6 9. 0-0 Na5 10. Ba4+ An irritating check: after 10 . . . Nxa4 11. Qxa4+ Black would have to play the awkward 11 . . . Nc6. **c6 11. Bc2 Bg6 12. Nbc3 Nac4 13. Qc1 Be7 14. Bxg6 hxg6** As we enter the middlegame White enjoys the extra space that Karpov is so good at using. But Black, with a solid blockade on d5, is not without chances. **15. Ne4 Rh4 16. N2g3 Qd5 17. Qc2 0-0-0 18. Bg5 Bxg5 19. Nxg5 Rd7** Ties the Rook down a bit. 19 . . . Rdh8 20. Nf3 Rxd4!? also had to be considered. **20. Nf3 Rf4 21. Rad1 g5 22. Qc1 Rxf3!?** If you didn't know the result, wouldn't you think this was strong? Breaking up the King's field while capturing a pawn or two is as much as one had a right to expect from an exchange sac. **23. gxf3 Qxf3 24. Rfe1 g4 25. Re4 Nxb2 26. Rd2 N2a4** Hereabouts Black loses the initiative. Can he improve? Note that if 26 . . . Nd3 White replies not 27. Qc3? Nxe5! but 27. Qd1!. **27. Qc2 Qa3 28. Rxg4 g6 29. Ne4 Kb8 30. Rg3 Qe7 31. h3 Qh4 32. Kh2 Qf4 33. Kg2 Qh6 34. Rdd3 a6 35. Rg4 Rd5 36. h4 Rb5 37. Rb3 Nd5 38. Rf3 Rb4 39. Ng5 Ne7 40. a3 Rb2 41. Qxa4 1-0.**

The SWIFT event was much more than a personal success for Karpov. The quality and competitiveness of the play was a vindication of the whole idea of a *grand prix*.

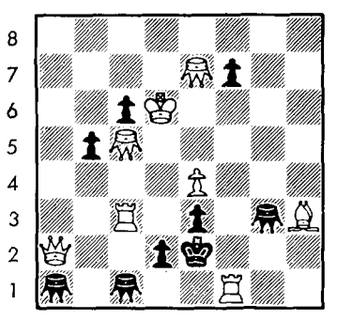
Now for something really spectacular, played on top board on the last world correspondence team championships:

Penrose-Vukcevic, IXth Correspondence Olympiad 1985-7. Ruy Lopez.
1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 Nf6 5. 0-0. b5 6. Bb3 Bb7 This development, known as the *Archangel Variation*, has always seemed to me a very natural reaction to the Lopez. As we shall see, however, it is not for the faint-hearted. **7. Re1** 7. d4 is the main alternative, when 7 . . . Nxd4 8 Bxf7+!? Kxf7 9. Nxe5+ Kg8 10. Qxd4 c5, followed by . . . Qe7xe4, is not bad for Black. **Bc5 8. c3 d6 9. d4 Bb6 10. Bg5 h6 11. Bh4 0-0** Going to the other wing with 11 . . . Qd7 and 12 . . . 0-0-0 also has its advocates. **12 a4 exd4 13. axb5 axb5 14. Rxa8 Bxa8 15. cxd4 Re8 16. Nc3** I had decided that 16. Qd3 was better, but Penrose shows otherwise. **g5** It used to be thought that things were fine for Black here, with his pieces hammering away at the White centre, after 17. Bg3 Na5. **17. Qd2! Na5** 17 . . . gxh4 18. Qxh6 is too strong. But there are much deeper points prepared. **18. Bc2 b4 19. Nxg5! bxc3 20. Qf4 Bxd4 21. Nh7! Be5 22. Qxh6 Re6 23. Nxf6+ Rxf6** 23 . . . Bxf6 fails to 24. e5. **24. Bxf6 Bxf6** Here one would expect 24 . . . Qxf6, but after 25. Qxf6 Bxf6 26. Ra1! cxb2 27. Rxa5 the ending is won for White. **25. Re3 Be5 26. Rh3 Qe7 27. Rh5 f5** At this stage Black could have saved on the postage . . . **28. Qg6+ Qg7 29. Qe6+ Qf7 30. Qc8+ Qf8 31. Qxc7 Bg7 32. Rxf5 Qe8 33. Rg5 Qf8 34. Rxa5 cxb2 35. Ra7 1-0.**

I came across that game in the latest issue of the magazine *Kingpin* whose editor, Jonathan Manley, is still trying to ensnare readers by giving copies away. Phone him on 01-554 6219 for details of special offers.

Another editor, Paul Valois, rightly takes me to task for omitting *The Problemist*, organ of the British Chess Problem Society, from a previous survey of British chess magazines. In addition to studies, mates in 2, 3 or more, help-mates and self-mates, *The Problemist* also contains Fairy Chess Problems. This is a dimension of chess which might incur the Platonic denunciation of being more than twice removed from reality, for you are free to make up purely imaginary pieces. One such is the **Grasshopper**, which moves by hopping over any piece or pawn (of either colour) that lies a Queen's move away to the square immediately beyond. And if it can't hop, it can't move. Best grasped by examples, so look at the diagram. The topsy-turvy Queens are Grasshoppers. The Black G on a1 can move to a3, d4 or c1. The White Ge7 can play Ge7xe3, but that wouldn't put Black in check and of course he could reply with Gc1xe3. Black can play Gg3-c7, but that harmlessly hops over the White K. Naturally White cannot play e4-e5, however, as that would put him in check. Got all that?

OK, over to you: it's White to play and mate in 2.



George Botterill

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This England

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☐ A telephone kiosk at Langton Herring was out of commission for over a year and the only coin which would make it work was a Rumanian one, the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils has been told. — *Western Gazette* (Bernard J. Nodes)

☐ A computer built at Imperial College, London as a crude simulation of the human mind has startled its creators by going on strike and refusing to co-operate with their work. Mr Michael Gera, a scientist in the Neural Computing Group at the college, said yesterday that the computer, known as a neural net, had simply refused to carry on with its lessons when it was given a task it considered beneath its capabilities. "You might say it had an attack of boredom." — *The Times* (Derek Morgan)

☐ Perhaps I should have had an idea of what lay ahead when I entered the Palace of Westminster and hung up my coat in the Members' cloakroom. I was directed to a hanger on which my name was printed and finding a pink bow attached to it I wisely decided to make some enquiries before discarding the coloured ribbon. Imagine my surprise when I was told that the ribbon was for my ceremonial sword. — *Co-operative News* (George Moor)

☐ Good news for all those women whose husbands will be 105 years old on 6 July this year. They now get a non-contributory pension (DHSS leaflet NP32/April 87 page 23). — *Guardian* (W. Pugh)

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